A CAPTAIN OF THE GORDONS

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A CAPTAIN OF THE GORDONS

A CAPTAIN OF THE GORDONS

SERVICE EXPERIENCES
1900–1909

EDITED BY HIS MOTHER
MRS. MARGARET MILLER
(GARRETT MILL)

AND HIS SISTER
HELEN RUSSELL MILLER

LONDON
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD.
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CAPTAIN MILLER'S EXPERIENCES

1900–1909

COMPRISING THE LETTERS OF

CAPTAIN DAVID S. MILLER,
THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS,

WHILE ACTING AS A.D.C.
BOER WAR 1900-1902,
AND
SPECIAL SERVICE OFFICER
SOMALILAND CAMPAIGN, 1903-1905.

TO

HIS COMRADES

AND

HIS FRIENDS

2066341

Great is the facile conqueror :
Yet haply he, who, wounded sore,
Breathless, unhorsed, all covered o'er
With blood and sweat,
Sinks foiled, but fighting evermore,—
Is greater yet.

WILLIAM WATSON.

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A SOLDIER IN THE MAKING

CHAPTER I

A SOLDIER IN THE MAKING

THIRTY years ago a young soldier was ordering his army. Cavalry and infantry, Horse Guards, Scots Greys, Highlanders, artillery composed his brigade. He dispatched some to guard his lines, his earnest blue eyes glancing from one group to another; for in the distance he saw the enemy sweeping over the hill on his right, and on his left a mass of men deploying. He made no error of judgment, but should he have left a loophole for the enemy there would have been no bloodshed; for his field was a table, his brilliant army, painted lead.

To him the battle was strenuous with life, for at five years brain and heart feed on playthings, and the passions of a forewarned vocation may breathe life into wood and stone.

The tin toys laid aside David enlisted his playmates in the Queen's Army, and presented them with gold-laced caps and belts. They were well drilled. The young captain's terse commands mingled with the clash of arms, his keen eye watched his men, who one and all were fired with his enthusiasm.

The regiment came to be disbanded on account of age, and once more the military spirit had to find a new outlet. His facile pencil found it. Each lesson-book and exercise-book he used in the Glasgow Academy was transformed into a sketch-book, and therein Hussars and Guards, colonels and Tommies, Highlanders and Marines jumbled together.

It could only have one ending, such a straight, strong line running through work and play: but, an only son, for many reasons the Army was barred.

He joined the Royal Engineer Volunteers when he was seventeen, and before he was eighteen he had passed not only all the necessary examinations, but also in tactics. Military law followed. In a year or so he passed the Army University examination through the Glasgow University, and at last it was thought wise to allow him to go up for his army examination. It was a year of stiff competition, and he just missed being in the very limited number allotted by the War Office at the Civil Competitive examination. This was a real disappointment; but he set his face to other work and continued in the Engineers.

Then the fateful 1899 brought the country to war, and all soldier spirits to burn with desire. Colenso and Magersfontein cried their bitter cry, and David, born with the blood that answered it, would take no rest till his sword was drawn in South Africa. A chance came. The Universities were given

commissions, and he quivered with hope. But the little bit of red tape interfered: he was a month or so older than the age first decided on. So that door was shut.

Meantime the Royal Engineer Volunteers had applied to the War Office for permission to send on a detachment under David, now a captain, to the war, and hope was again in the ascendant, for everything seemed in a straight line: but again red tape showed its stringent mark. The War Office would not allow a captain to command the contingent: the officer must be only a lieutenant! He went to London and had an interview with Mr. George Wyndham, then Under-Secretary of State for War, who promised to let him know what could be done. However, although the heads of the War Office seemed anxious to gain him for the army, red tape could neither be made white nor black, and David had barely returned from London when he found that notwithstanding his acknowledged ability for the post he asked, the rule of three must be obeyed. He was too experienced!

"It is no use, mother," he said, after the final word had come from the War Office to the effect that a captain could not be allowed to conduct the Engineer contingent. "They won't have me."

"Well," said his mother, knowing that he would enlist as a trooper, "go up to London to-night, and try once more."

"All right!" he said. "It's the forlorn hope, but worth trying."

He travelled all night, and when he called at the War Office in the morning, he was granted another interview with Mr. Wyndham. David explained that although the War Office wished to appoint a lieutenant the Colonel and all the officers wished the detachment to go out under him.

"Come back to see me in the afternoon," said Mr. Wyndham.

Hope was again flying his flag. David, in the afternoon, had his third interview with Mr. Wyndham.

After a little talk Mr. Wyndham said:—

"Go and see Sir Coleridge Grove; he wants to meet you."

So David was ushered into Sir Coleridge Grove's room. Another little talk, and then the supreme moment of David's life came.

"You may either take your draft of Engineers to South Africa or, if you prefer, I shall give you a commission in any regiment of the line, or in the Artillery." Sir Coleridge Grove shook him warmly by the hand and sent him to Colonel ———.

"I am glad to see you," said the Colonel smiling. "You have been turning the War Office upside down. Which regiment do you want?"

"Which may I have?"

"I suppose you want a Scots regiment?"

"May I have a Highland regiment?"

"Anything you like!" The Colonel smiled. "The Seaforths or the Camerons? They are at the front—one battalion of each. Think it over and let me know."

David left him, and walked up and down the streets thinking. He wired home, and the reply was in favour of the Artillery; but, as fate would have it, he met an officer of the Highland Light Infantry, whom he knew well, and asked his advice, and, in the course of conversation, he heard that *both* battalions of the Gordons were at the front.

David had found his regiment.

He received his commission in the First Battalion of the Gordon Highlanders on March 24th, 1900, and on the 29th he had the following letter from Sir Coleridge Grove :—

WAR OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.
March 29th, 1900.

DEAR SIR,

I am glad to be able to tell you that you will be sent out to the front shortly.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) COLERIDGE GROVE.

David left for South Africa on April 2nd, in charge of a detachment of militia from Colchester.

The "Orotava," the ship in which David would sail, was already well filled with eager men when he, with his kilt swinging, led his men across the

gangway, his heart beating with the drums that sounded their rat-a-tat as the band cheered them on; not that there were any laggard steps that day! The shining of eyes was the only reflection of the victory that blazed before them—to do or die for Old England, but to win at last.

The little groups here and there on the great quay were not so brave, for the pathos was left there, as the ahoys and cries of the sailors told of the first step seawards of the great ship. The anchors rattled on the side, the engines throbbed; and the ship glided past, her deck filled with waving hats and handkerchiefs.

David leant his arm on the gunwale, and gazed at the little group of three who belonged to him. Eyes were turned to eyes while the ship passed out of ken.

So began the real soldier life of David.

VOYAGE OUT

CHAPTER II

VOYAGE OUT: LONDON TO SOUTH AFRICA, APRIL—MAY, 1900

R.M.S. "Orotava."
April, 1900.

I HAVE a cabin all to myself, and am very comfortable. The pilot takes this. . . . We stop at Las Palmas May 3rd.

April-May, 1900.

I am having a great time. We were inoculated for enteric on Sunday afternoon about two p.m. I was done first with two subalterns in the 10th Hussars—both very good chaps indeed—great friends of Potter's. I went off with them to their cabin to see what would happen and lay down in a spare berth, but I became so ill that I could not go back to my own cabin, so stayed with them till this morning (Tuesday). We were all three very bad, but kept each other cheery. The doctor said healthy people took it worst. I was the worst case among the officers. I am all right now, feeling very fit. My pals are the two 10th Hussars and Captain Mainwaring of the Dublin Fusiliers. The rest are

largely militiamen. The C.O. of troops is a Major of Dublin Fusiliers.

We passed the hospital ship "Oceania" to-day, and cheered her lustily. The names of the 10th Hussars men are Meade and Mitford. There are always three officers on duty on a trooper—captain of the day, subaltern of the day, and officer of the watch, who is on twice a day, for four hours at a stretch. I have had a time at this.

The draft is going strong—no crime. We have had lovely weather. I am going ashore at Las Palmas with my 10th friends to look round.

Wednesday.

P.S.—We get into Las Palmas about 6 a.m. to-morrow morning. We shall leave about 1 p.m.—so shall have about four hours on shore. We have made up a party, Meade, Mitford and myself, and a very nice fellow in the Lothian Yeomanry called Campbell—also a chap in the Connaught Ranger Militia, the Earl of Kingston, an awful good chap.

The weather is simply perfect. I am as brown as a berry. I take great precautions against chills and sunstrokes—always wear my cholera belts. The feeding on board the ship is splendid both for officers and men. I find that officers in the Gordons are thought well of by all.

We have only one Parade per day, at 11 o'clock, when the men get physical drill—which they badly need.

TROOPSHIP "OROTAVA."

Tuesday.

The men are rather a weedy lot, mostly militiamen —most of my draft are under nineteen years, and have not more than six weeks' service. Great shame to send them out so young. The funny thing is that they do not allow regulars to go on foreign service under twenty years of age—but they collar militiamen down to eighteen.

My sergeant is a good man, a regular (thank goodness) of twelve years' service. The fellows on board are mostly militia officers. My chief friends are Meade and Mitford of 10th Hussars and Mainwaring of the Dublin Fusiliers. There is also Major Molyneux of the Liverpool regiment Mitford has a cousin in my battalion.

S.S. "OROTAVA."

May 14th, 1900.

We are having a great time on board. The weather has been perfect, hardly a motion in the boat. The heat crossing the line was tremendous —mother will have some idea of it, having crossed it herself. Many of the fellows slept on deck, but I stick to my cabin—being afraid of chills and getting stopped for the front.

I have made some nice friends on board, very particularly Mitford, Meade, Kingston and Campbell. We are all much the same age, and keep

very much together. They are splendid fellows. Kingston has asked me to send him one of my photographs, and as he will be on service for some time he wants you to send it to Kilronan Castle.

Our programme every day is :—

Breakfast, 9 a.m.
Orderly room, 10 a.m.
C.O.'s parade, 11 a.m. till 12 noon.
Physical drill 3 times a week, 3 till 4 p.m.
Musketry once a week, 7.30 till 9 a.m.

The men are splendidly fed, and all my draft are fit. They are very young, poor things. We have details of not less than 23 regiments on board. The men behave well as a whole and many of the crimes are through ignorance, as they are all militia, and all the artillery are reserve—so we have no regulars except the sergeants and some of the officers.

We have great fun at nights, rucksing about. Mainwaring, the adjutant, who is a great pal of ours, joins in as heartily as anyone. We have been moderate—only had champagne twice.

We do not know whether we shall be landed at Cape Town or East London. I have been practising with my revolver, and am a fair shot. We are only supposed to be allowed 35 lbs. up to the front, but we all find that our valises weigh 35 lbs. with nothing inside them—I expect this regulation is merely to prevent officers taking all their belongings up with them.

I am in great spirits and magnificent health. The weather just now is fresh and bracing. I am writing this on mother's little leather case—Really, no more.

S.S. " Orotava."
May 14th.

This is a very fine boat, and we are fed like fighting-cocks. This morning to breakfast I had fish—sausages—curry—eggs—tea—scones—jam—! I am hungry again, it being close on lunch.

I expect my friends Mitford, Meade and I may go up to Bloemfontein together. We hope so. We may be discharged like so many packages on the quay at Cape Town, or taken on to East London. We imagine this more likely, as it is so much nearer to Bloemfontein.

We have a doctor on board (R.A.M.C.) who was all through Ladysmith. We have songs in the evening, and fun generally. You would like all my friends—Mitford, Meade and Kingston. Kingston is an impulsive Irishman with a kind heart. Meade is one of the best—I am very fond of him. Indeed, there is little to choose between them.

We arrive at Cape Town on Wednesday, 12 noon. There is wonderfully little to write about, as every day is the same. I sent two little fancy things from Las Palmas.

A Captain of the Gordons

S.S. "RANEE."

May 18th, 1900.

Transhipped at Cape Town to "Ranee" for Port Elizabeth—from thence I go to Springfontein to hand over Norfolk draft, and then on to my regiment. I handed over my Bedford draft yesterday. Have been working like a nigger for two days.

Meade and Mitford and Campbell have gone on shore here to Maitland Camp.

Had one night on shore. The view of the Bay is lovely—but the town is a dirty hole. The Mount Nelson Hotel is the place. We went there to see Mitford's aunt, the Countess of Airlie, but she had gone on to Bloemfontein.

We have just heard that Mafeking is relieved, and all the ships are flying bunting.

I have been out with a string picket all morning, bringing in drunk men. One hundred of the Militia escaped last night, and had to be captured. They are in now—had to be brought down in donkey carts.

I get out at Port Elizabeth with Kingston and Mainwaring, and we are going up country together. I met a fellow yesterday in the Buffs—who is here wounded—who told me that the last time he had seen my regiment they were absolutely in rags.

I wish you would send me out 100 cigarettes every short time, and some tobacco. This is a beastly rotten cargo ship with no comforts—but it is a short sail.

Voyage Out

S.S. "RANEE."

CAPE TOWN DOCKS.

This is a stinking place—the docks, I mean. The town is dirty when you are in it, but looks well from the bay.

You never saw such a mess as the disembarkation from the "Orotava." Stores not marked—men deserting—men drunk—nobody knowing what to do. We had an awful time. Mitford and Meade got out of it all. I tried to get leave last night as I got an invitation through Kingston to dine with Lady Castleton, but the major who was in charge refused me leave as I was wanted for a picket. They let the militia officers go, but kept the regulars on board.

The whole place teems with soldiers—all, or nearly all, the militia are on the lines of communication and being used for loading trains. Of course militia officers joining their regiments are all right. My regiment, I hear, has been doing great things—spearing Boers. There are a lot of Boer prisoners here, in a big park. One of them was shot dead yesterday for coming too close to the barricade. Boat just starting.

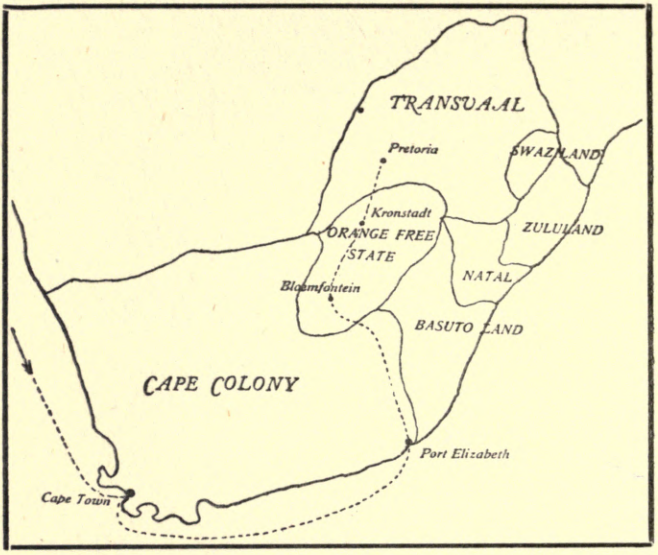
TELEGRAM (FROM KROONSTADT).

CAPE TOWN, 1.6.00.

Flourishing. David.

WITH THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS,

June—July, 1900



INDICATION OF ROUTE TO JOIN THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS AT PRETORIA.

CHAPTER III

WITH THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS, JUNE—JULY, 1900

Port Elizabeth—Bloemfontein—Kroonstadt—Pretoria—Germiston — Elandsfontein — Irene — Krugersdorp — Battle of Wolvercranz.

KOPJE (40 miles south Vaal River).
June 1st, 1900.

I HAVE been having some awful experiences. The difficulty is getting up to one's regiment. Trains run anyhow, and one has to shift for oneself.

I arrived at Port Elizabeth on the "Ranee"—a fearful cattle boat which rolled like anything—about a fortnight or ten days ago. We went into camp with our men, then went and had dinner in the train; slept, anyhow, on the ground. Next day we came on in the train, going about five miles an hour up by Nauropoort and Norval's Rant to Springfontein and Edinburg, when I handed over my draft of Norfolks. The difficulty all the way up was water. It always has to be boiled before drunk, as the whole country seethes with enteric.

This is the most uninteresting barren-looking country you could possibly imagine—barren veldt and kopjes—just the single line of rail running

through the great veldt, with thousands of drafts going up and thousands of sick coming down. Bloemfontein is very disappointing—just a little English townlet of some 6,000 inhabitants. Our camps are all round it. The hospitals are full, and a scarcity of nurses. Eighty soldiers were buried the day I arrived, nearly all enteric fever.

I had a sad duty to perform, as one of our subalterns, Dalrymple Hay, died there of enteric the day after I arrived, and I buried him. He had been there a month ill, making a good fight for it, but it was too much for him. We have a depôt of about fifty men and they turned out. It was a sad sight. First, the simple coffin with the Gordon tartan rug and the Union Jack over it lying in the tent—up in the hospital lines. Then the placing the coffin on the gun carriage while the great brown Gordon soldiers in their tattered kilts presented arms. We marched about one mile to the graveyard with the pipes playing the "Flowers of the Forest"—and then we buried him.

He is, I believe, the last surviving son of his father, Major Hay, of Dunlop, Ayrshire. I knew his brother well, who was at Maguire's with me. He was killed in India.

Coming up from Bloemfontein I slept, the first night, in my coat on the top of a coal truck with two subalterns in the Rifles. The next, we fortunately got in a guard's van. We finally arrived at Kroonstadt, a rotten place—full of enteric and dead

and dying. Nothing to drink but water, and that was bad. I met Barton Aiken there. He was on the march with his militia. They are keeping all the militia on lines of communication. I am now past them all.

I picked up a servant at Kroonstadt—a Gordon named Wilkie, who had been sick. He is an excellent fellow, and is now cooking me a chicken for which I paid 2s. This is a great luxury—nothing but biscuit and bully-beef. Bread is unknown. I'd give pounds for a bottle of beer.

We were sniped at last night, I believe, by some of De Wet's scouts. We start to-morrow, 5 a.m., per convoy across the veldt for the Vaal River. I fear the Boers are at their last gasp, and I shall see no fighting as it was.

CAMP,
GORDON HIGHLANDERS,
GERMISTON.

Have had no chance of posting letters—do not know when I shall get one. Had a fearful time with convoy—bad water, little food—had to drink water with dead beasts in it. Joined my regiment at Pretoria. Excellent lot of fellows, but very few left.

I just missed a good action where we had nine officers and one hundred and six men hit. They had to charge across an open plain and take a

position—which they did. We were specially mentioned in General Orders as having marched 650 miles, and taken part in twenty-seven minor and ten general actions.

I have been under fire, but not in a general action as yet. I had a great disappointment the other day. We left Pretoria in the afternoon, and marched fifteen miles, where we camped for the night, and were told we would concentrate with the 21st Brigade in the morning to attack Botha who was occupying a position six miles off. Accordingly off we went in the morning—guns in front. But the Boers were not having any, and ran for it! So there was no fighting. We marched here next day, twenty-three miles. At the beginning of the day the right flank came into action, but only with a patrol. We are lying in readiness to move by rail at once to any point attacked.

I am in magnificent health. The days are like June at home, and the nights like frosty mid-winter. We sleep in the open—in tents.

June 17th.

Still here. Four companies, including my own, are holding themselves in readiness to go at once to Klip River to repel an expected attack. We are very busy here. Pickets every other night and patrols during the day. I am seeing all the nasty side of war with none of the chances of glory. Freezing nights in picket—ready for attack—moving

CHURCH SQUARE, PRETORIA.

[*Face page* 40.

here and there. Sometimes the baggage does not turn up, and we sleep as we stand in our kilts—with a biting wind, and sometimes rain. Fever— dysentery—death everywhere.

War is a fearful thing. The actual active is not so bad, but the waiting,—the cold,—the sudden moves,—bad water,—small comforts,—men and officers tired out but cheerful. The long, dreary, weary marches always expecting sniping—all this is the trying part. I have written this as I had snatches of time, and now have my first opportunity of posting it since I left Port Elizabeth.

We shall come back to Edinburgh Castle after the war. I shall not be able to go to India till I have finished my Recruits' course in about one year from coming home. I shall be sorry to go to the 92nd, as the fellows here are all excellent chaps—but it is the only way of getting to India. I am writing this, lying on Aunt Mina's rug on the veldt

P.S.—All our mails have been burnt by the enemy—2000 bags. Christian de Wet is the man who is keeping the show going.

ELANDSFONTEIN,
TRANSVAAL.
June 25th, 1900.

I got your letters dated May 11th—also the papers, "English Illustrated," "Graphic," etc., which were very acceptable. If you could send me

out pipe, tobacco, cigarettes and chocolates I should appreciate them very much.

We went off again the other night at three in the morning to battle—fight down at Klip ; but it didn't come off, so we returned—cold, weary and hungry. We mess very well here as we are only eight miles from Johannesburg, and can get things, but everything is fearfully expensive. I was introduced by the C.O. to our General, Smith-Dorrien, the other day. He is supposed to be one of the smartest soldiers out here, and has done awfully well.

We are kept hard at it here with pickets and patrols and night alarms. The pickets are the worst as the cold at night is intense, and one has one's kilt on the whole time. I am in " B " Company, commanded by Captain Dingwall, who is a most excellent chap who tells me Indian stories. He was in the Dargai charge and wounded in six places.

I have had a small bivouac made—" bivvies " we call them—in which I sleep. It is just made of shirt-cloth, and is about 7 feet long and 3 broad, like this In this is my valise in which I sleep. My jaeger bed is splendid, and keeps me nice and warm with Aunt Mina's rug on top. I have been in Johannesburg. It is a big tawdry sort of place. There are excellent hotels, however, and a good club. I am going in for a small spree to-morrow if I can get leave. Three of us generally go in together.

Battle of Wolvercranz

Pretoria, where I joined my regiment, is a pretty little place, but I believe rather unhealthy.

ELANDSFONTEIN.

Sunday, July 1st, 1900.

We are still here, and living extremely well. We are constantly on duty, picket or patrol. When not doing anything else I am "in the squad" as they call it—*i.e.*, doing recruit drill. As I know it all already it comes easy, but they are fearfully particular, and one has to know it absolutely perfectly, in fact be able to act as an instructor to raw recruits.

The sergeant is extremely pleased with me, and although I have only been doing it two days (at any intervals apart, as duties constantly interfere), he says in another day I am to go before the Adjutant, on Tuesday, to be examined in squad drill—which is the first part. Every one is charming. I shall probably finish, if I get a chance of consecutive work, in about two months. This means I shall know all about squad drill, physical drill, bayonet and musketry exercise, company and battalion drill, down to the very smallest detail.

Davis is a very nice chap, and he and I are naturally very much together, being the two juniors—but every one is excellent.

Every now and then we are roused from our sleep in the middle of the night into the bitter cold and off we go per train in trucks to the scene of

operations somewhere up or down the line which is attacked.

Down we go, get into trenches and wait. Then some shots come flying about, and you bang away—and then they clear off. Always the same. The other day we were raised about two in the morning. Up I got. Once you are up the Adjutant tells off the companies to go, as some must always stay here. I heard—

"A, B, C and D right half Battalion, march immediately!"

Blanket rolled; then we got dressed. Just as I was dressing—Bang! went a big gun about ten miles off—then a pause—then another. Looking through glasses we saw the flash of the gun, and then the bursting of the shell. We sat on the grass in the bitter cold waiting on the train, and listening to the guns—where we were going. Then the firing ceased, and telegram came to the C.O. from the General saying that the attack had been driven off by the Canadians.

I have an excellent servant, named Robert, who keeps my little "bivvy" as clean as a new pin. I am still excellently well. I wrote to Sir Henry and Colonel Clark, and Mrs. Anderson last week.

July 3rd, 1900.

Just a line to say that I have got papers all right,—four magazines, "Graphic," "Punch," "Herald,"

" Scotsman," and " Weekly Herald." I missed the fight at Johannesburg by about five days—frightful bad luck. I am to be examined to-morrow in squad drill.

IRENE.

July 9th.

Just a hasty note. We are off after Botha—19th Brigade—Shropshires,—Cornwall L.I. and Suffolks, and ourselves. Cavalry and guns.

Expect fighting. Very fit. Letters of June to hand—also magazine. Always thankful for letters. Please send tobacco, cigarettes. Telegram sent from Kroonstadt, June 1st. May not be able to write for some time. Very happy in regiment.

KRUGERSDORP.

Sunday, July 16th.

I have at last been in a small action. We marched from here with the Shropshire Light Infantry, and one section (two guns). 78th Batty. R.F.A., also some Yeomanry for scouting. We started about 6.30 with the Yeomanry out in front like a fan, about five to six miles in front. My company B, and A formed the advance guard extended at five paces.

After marching about five miles the enemy suddenly fired on one of the Yeomanry scouts. We halted and lay down, and the main body of Yeomanry galloped out. They were immediately fired on very sharply, and came galloping back as hard as they

could lick. I was right in advance with my half company, and as the guns galloped forward into position I was told to advance and occupy a small kopje on my left front. We advanced, I leading the men, and then almost immediately came into the fire area. The fire was awful. Whing! Whing! —Tut! Tut! all round, overhead, and at your feet. I shouted "Follow me! Double!" and off we went pelting through the fire—dashed on to the kopje—got to the top—took cover and opened fire.

The place was a perfect hell with bullets. I confess I did not like it. We were supported in a few minutes by C Company—my left half under Dingwall and M Company. A Company with D Company were on the right on another small kopje —the two guns in between the two kopjes—H, K, and L in reserve with the Shropshires about a mile in rear with the baggage.

The Boers occupied a larger kopje straight to my front, and another straight to the front of where A Company was.

I happened to look down to where the guns were, and saw that they had come too close, and had scarcely any men left to serve the guns. They brought up a team of horses to get the guns away, but the poor brutes were immediately shot down— so frightful was the fire. In a few minutes they went out of action—that is to say fifteen out of sixteen gunners lay dead or wounded in small heaps by the guns and the Subaltern, who served his guns

splendidly, and was the last to take cover, was shot in three places.

It was a frightful sight. I had no time to look as I was busy keeping the men firing and firing myself. Next time I looked I saw some of our men with Younger and Allan, who were with their Companies at the bottom of the kopje, rushing out to try and serve the guns. I immediately went down to the Colonel and volunteered for the job, but was ordered back to the firing line—so I had to go up again. They got out one limber. Then Younger went again with some more men to try to get out a gun but was almost immediately shot. I went down again and begged the Colonel to let me go, but he told me I must stay with my men on top and keep up the fire. He allowed Gordon the Adjutant to go, and he got back all right—but it was no use trying to get the gun. Poor Younger—a splendid fellow—was killed, and many of the men wounded. Gordon will get the V.C.

Then we lay there getting potted. Then the Boers, who were really wonderfully smart, occupied a kopje on our right rear and right front. It was jolly, I tell you. Bullets from three sides. I can't imagine why I was not hit. I got hit on the knee by a splinter.

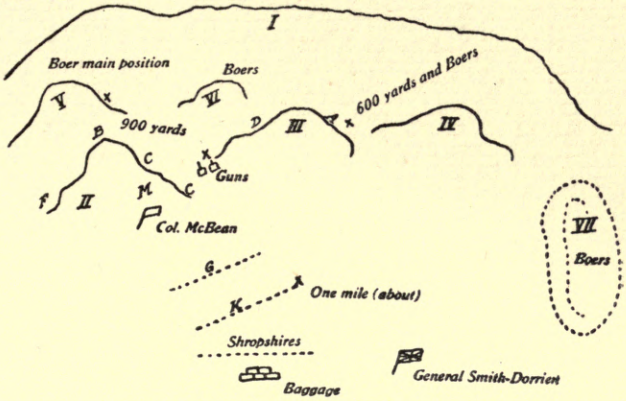
The General heliographed up about one o'clock that Lord Roberts had wired cancelling this operation altogether, but the Colonel heliod back that unless we waited till dark we could not save the guns. So

we waited—and got the guns away in the dark. Just when it became dark we heard the Boers squealing " Voorwaarts ! " and they dashed down to assault us, and the Colonel shouted out :—

" Gordon Highlanders, fix bayonets ! Prepare to charge ! "

But the Boers retreated at once to their kopje, and after that the firing gradually ceased. If it had not been for the order we should have taken the position with the bayonets in the morning. We found out afterwards that the Boers decamped during the night—and so did we.

We marched back here and to-day Methuen has marched in with 700 Mounted Infantry and eighteen guns, and two brigades Infantry. We shall go out again shortly, I expect, to have another slap at them. I must now close up as I am on picket to-night.



BATTLE OF WOLVERCRANZ

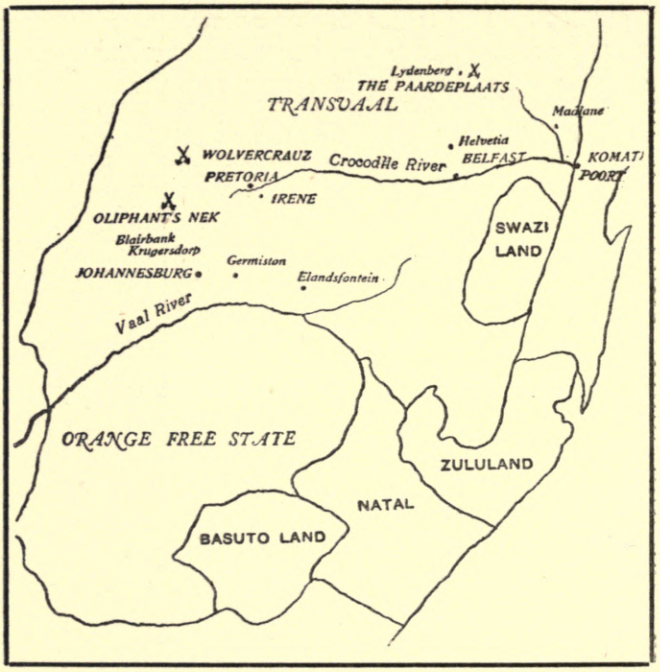
July 4th, 1900

KEY TO MAP.

I. Large kopje from which Boers first fired on Yeomanry.
II. Kopje with Gordon companies as marked. Myself on top.
III. Gordons.
IV. Boers. Ejected from this by maxim gun.
V. Main position of Boers.
VI. Flanking fire on our kopje.
VII. Boers attacked right flank and rear. Ejected by Shropshire maxim gun.

WITH THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS,

July—October, 1900



WITH THE FIRST BATTALION, THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS, IN THE TRANSVAAL.

June, 1900—*January*, 1901.

CHAPTER IV

WITH THE GORDON HIGHLANDERS, JULY—OCTOBER, 1900

Krugersdorp—Blairbank—Krugersdorp—Engagement at stream near Wolvercranz—Sicca—Engagement at Oliphant's Nek—Wolvercranz—Welverdine—Belfast—Battle of the Paardeplaats at Lydenberg—Helvetiae—Kumati Poort—Swaziland.

KRUGERSDORP.

WE start to-morrow to fight again. Lord Methuen has arrived, and we go this time in two columns—our brigade with six field-guns, two howitzers, and a pom-pom—*i.e.* Vickers-Maxim quick-firing gun firing 1-lb. shells, under Smith-Dorrien; and another under Methuen, to make a demonstration.

We are to carry the position—after that we fight again twenty miles further on, and then back by rail to Pretoria. Davis is in my bivvy gassing away, so that I can hardly write. I keep hitting him in the stomach with no effect.

BLAIRBANK.

July 26th.

No light to see. Just a chance getting this off—it may not reach you. I am very well. The

weather is broken, and is sometimes very wet. Been in action several times since Wolvercranz. Shall write fully shortly. Please do not forget to send me regularly cigarettes and tobacco —also you might send chocolate and raisins. We do long marches sometimes with nothing to eat, and then they keep one up. But please be sure to send the cigarettes, say 100 every fortnight. I only brought 200, and finished them in the steamer coming out.

The papers are splendid. In very great haste. We have just marched 100 miles.

July 26th.

Just got your letters—which as usual I was delighted to get—also papers, and best of all, cigarettes—which are exactly the kind I like. This is just a line as mail goes at once.

KRUGERSDORP.

July 31st.

Here we are back again to Krugersdorp after a very trying week—which I shall describe—as I had not time to do so in my last letter. We left here on a Wednesday afternoon, and marched about seven miles to a stream about three miles to the left flank of the position we had attacked the week before at Wolvercranz. We consisted of about 700 Yeomanry, ourselves, the Shropshires and

one battery of Field Artillery (six guns). Lord Methuen came with us although we were directly commanded by Smith-Dorrien; another force consisting of the Northumberland Fusiliers, the Northampton Regiment, and the Yorkshire Light Infantry with one battery of F.A., two howitzers, and two pom-poms advanced at the same time direct on to the position.

We encamped for the night, and attacked in the morning. But the Boers, evidently afraid of so large a force, fled at our approach to another range, further back. They fired at the Yeomanry from there, but as my regiment extended for the attack they again evacuated this position for still another to our right flank. Accordingly six guns and a pom-pom were sent with our right-half battalion as escort to shell them and clear them out.

I am in this half battalion, and as Dingwall had command of the four companies I commanded B Company in action for the first time. We advanced up the hill, clearing it, and the guns got a good position at the top and a good old row began.

The firing was not much this time, and the enemy were scattered. We marched on again, and camped at a place called Sicca, after twenty miles. We got nothing to eat that night, as the transport stuck in the river. We went on again next morning, and marched about fifteen miles, having a small fight on the way. (By this time the whole division were marching together.) I was on picket that night,

and got no dinner or breakfast, as we marched at 4 a.m. about twelve miles to Oliphant's Nek, and fought there. We cleared them out of the Pass, and had a rest on Sunday, for which I was duly thankful.

The spot we camped in was a delightful one, with beautiful orange groves and ferns. This part of the Transvaal is very delightful—much finer than any other I have yet seen.

We started on Monday and came back here by a slightly different route, after having marched about 200 miles. We are now being refitted with jackets and boots. The men are at present in rags, and then we go off again.

There is, I believe, some chance of our going to China—but not very much.

I am still extraordinarily well.

DETACHED POST,
NEAR KRUGERSDORP.
August 8th.

Just a line to say that I have got letters, cigarettes, and papers for which many thanks.

I am in detached post, in a small redoubt, awaiting attack. Fearfully cold at night. Strong wind.

I am in command of my company at present. No news. This may not reach you.

Battle of Lydenberg

WELVERDINE.

August 14th.

We have moved here from Krugersdorp. De Wet is about twenty miles north of us with eight generals after him. I hope they catch him this time. They say he has collected all the different commandos, and now has 7000 men with five guns; and is short of ammunition and food. Some of his escaped prisoners came in here and say they have been shamefully treated—being jamboked to make them go faster.

The great mistake they are making here, as far as I can see, is that they leave all the farms and small tenure standing. The result of this is that the Boers have always means of getting fresh supplies. I would burn all the farms in the disaffected parts, and also all the towns which we are not occupying, sending the women and children out to the nearest commando. This would hamper them in their movements, stop the supplies, and in all probability end the war. However, I suppose that Roberts is afraid of people at home kicking up a row.

We go on in the afternoon to Friedrichstag and garrison it. I am in splendid health, and enjoying myself as much as can be expected with the discomfort and cold at night. The fellows in this regiment are awfully good fellows. Davis, Duff, Lumsden and Alexander are my greatest friends. We feed well, but stuff is very expensive, and our mess is about 11s. per day.

The rains are due soon, and we hope to get into tents before then, but doubt this very much. This is a dreadful place—just a station—no troops but ourselves. Every one is so nice that I have never been homesick, but weary to see you all again.

Day after day is the same—hot sun, cool wind, frost and bitter cold at night. Very healthy, but trying, living in the open.

WELVERDINE,
TRANSVAAL.
August 20th, 1900.

This war seems never-ending. There has been another tremendous chase after De Wet, but as usual he has given every one the slip. The plan was well thought out. Broadwood with the Cavalry, Hart, Smith-Dorrien, Ridley and Clements were to chase him into the barley beside Oliphant's Nek, —which you may remember from one of my former letters, we assisted in taking. Everything went all right, and De Wet was covered in the barley, and had only one way of escape, viz. Oliphant's Nek. But De Wet got through, and away north—it is thought, to join Botha.

It seems to me this war will never end unless each burgher as he comes in to give up his arms, or is caught, is made a prisoner until peace is declared. For instance. The other day a burgher came in to the Staff Office here—said he had just come off De Wet's commando, wished to stop fighting and

give up his arms. Roberts' orders are that in such cases the man gets a pass and becomes a free man; his arms are taken away and he goes about his work as usual, but is warned that if caught again with arms he will be shot. The man gets his farm into order, goes off again, joins a commando, gets another rifle, fights for a time, then comes in and gives himself up to *some other* staff officer. There is no way of checking this, and it seems to me that the thing will never finish unless some other plan is adopted.

As for myself I am in the best of health and spirits. There is a rumour that after the war the regiment stays here for two years. I write every week but you may not get my letters.

WELVERDINE,
TRANSVAAL.
August 25th, 1900.

Since writing last nothing has occurred, except the arrival of the mail. . . . I write whenever I can get the chance—generally every week. The regiment is split up at present, which we all dislike —the left half battalion having gone with a convoy. However, we shall get together again shortly we hope. We shall probably go from here to Pretoria to take part in operations to the north.

I got a horse the other day from a Captain Meade, a chap in the Royal Horse Guards—a brother of Meade's—and young Duff and I had some good

rides together, one of us borrowing another pony.

There is absolutely no news at present, except that I am appallingly fit and enjoying myself.

BELFAST.
August 28th.

P.S.—We have come here in a hurry to join Roberts, who has Buller, Dundonald and French with him. There is going to be a general advance against Boer position in a day or so, and "Bobs," who was here yesterday talking to the men, says that he thinks this will finish the show.

Our 2nd battalion is about five miles from us.

HELVETIA,
NEAR MACHADORP.

Just time for a short note. We have just marched 100 miles under Ian Hamilton. We stormed a position called Paardeplaats along with Buller's force, near Lydenberg. The Boers had a good many big guns, and the shelling was pretty severe. I shall write a description later when more time We go off again shortly to Kumati Poort, at least we think so. I am in splendid health, and not wearied at all by the marching. The heat is getting much greater, and will get much worse. The chocolate arrived and I enjoyed it very much, and it was very useful on the march. The pipe has

turned up all right, and is an excellent one. Many thanks.

NEAR KUMATI POORT.
September 20th.

We are on the march and have been so for weeks, and are all very tired of it. We have come 800 miles. This will be a short letter, as I have only a very short time to write, as the mail goes off shortly. They generally give us just about an hour's warning about the mail.

We marched from Belfast, as I think I wrote before, under Ian Hamilton and Smith-Dorrien, Royal Scots, Royal Irish, ourselves, two five-inch guns, 20th Battery R.F.A. We have come through most wonderful scenery, very mountainous. We got badly shelled by the Boer Long Toms several days, the worst being when in camp in Lydenberg, and the attack on the Paardeplaats on the following day. I got just missed by a pom-pom during the attack. I was leading the company up to attack in flank, and crossing a sky-line they got eight shells into us.

I shall write descriptions of the march, country and various engagements when we get to Kumati Poort. At present we rise at 3.45 and march at 5 a.m., and get into camp at about 2 or 3 in the afternoon. I am exceedingly well—although the weather is becoming very hot indeed as we are very low down now.

A Captain of the Gordons

MAALANE STATION
(20 MILES WEST OF KUMATI POORT).
October 7th, 1900.

I do not think I have written you at all fully since leaving Lydenberg, and I cannot remember whether I described the attack on Paardeplaats, where we met the 2nd Battalion.

We marched into camp at Lydenberg one morning, and got settled down for the day—and employed ourselves watching Buller's column coming along the road. Just as the middle of his convoy was about opposite our camp the shelling began from the crest of a large hill about six miles off. They shelled us with three guns,—two 6-inch (Long Toms) and one howitzer—from about one o'clock till dark.

We paraded next morning just before dawn, and they let us cross the river before doing anything. Then the shelling began again. We extended, and advanced with the Royal Scots on our right front, and Royal Irish to our left flank. I never heard such a row in my life. Our 5-inch guns and Buller's 4.7-inch naval guns were on our left flank firing away like blazes—and our batteries of 15-pounders went galloping up the road, one lot to our left front, and another lot to our right rear. After going about two miles, the infantry fire began, and the pom-poms. The noise was deafening—our own shells coming over our heads from both flanks, and right in rear. You saw the white smoke of the Long Toms

over the hill, and then, in about thirty seconds, came the boom of the gun. Then you heard the shell beginning to scream, gradually coming nearer —and the bursting overhead,—and then the swish of the shrapnel bullets as they fell like a shower of rain. The pom-poms make much the worst row of the lot, but are not at all deadly, as they seldom get anybody. If they do hit you, of course you are a goner. They very nearly got me that day, as I was leading my half company over the side of a nullah. I heard the beastly thing go pom—pom—pom—pom—pom five times, but thought they were firing to my left, but old M'Kelvie, one of the jocks in my company, who was following immediately behind me, said :—

" That's for us yins, sir ! "

And sure enough, again—pom—pom—pom—pom —pom—pom—six more shells, and this time they had the range. There was no use taking cover, as my orders were to get on, so on we went, and just then a battery galloped up to a ridge on my left, and put the thing out of action. Never was better pleased to see a battery in my life !

The Boers retired before we reached the top, and we ran into the 92nd at the top of the hill. Ian Hamilton's force went back to Lydenberg and Buller went on.

It is extremely difficult for an infantry officer on the firing line to give a lucid account of a fight, as one is busy keeping the men at their proper distance,

etc., etc., and just plodding along, seeing very little except the shells bursting and the occasional casualties. The enclosed drawing may guide you.*

Well, we continued our march next day, and had a weary time. Reveille at 2.30, breakfast at 3, march at 4 a.m., every day the same thing—trudging along in the dark until the dawn came—pulling waggons up impossible breakneck places, making fords, mending breakdowns, pulling, marching, sweating with a fearful thirst and an empty water-bottle—urging on the weary men—hardly able to speak for dust, and a parched tongue cleaving to the roof of your mouth. Camp about 3 in the afternoon—no shade from the sun; lunch or tea, wash, shave, sleep if you can, but generally too hot; dinner, bed about 7.30—unless you are on picket. This for three solid weeks. It has been the most trying march of the war—all say so—from Belfast to Komati Poort via Lydenberg. The Guards' Brigade under Pole-Carew were a day's march in front of us the whole way. Now, thank God, we are resting.

I was placed with my half company on detachment at this station, and other companies scattered down the line at the various stations to Kumati Poort. I was O.C. at Maalane for seven days, and then Dingwall joined me with the other half company which had been on detachment mending a bridge a little further down the line—so he is now

* *See Page* 66.

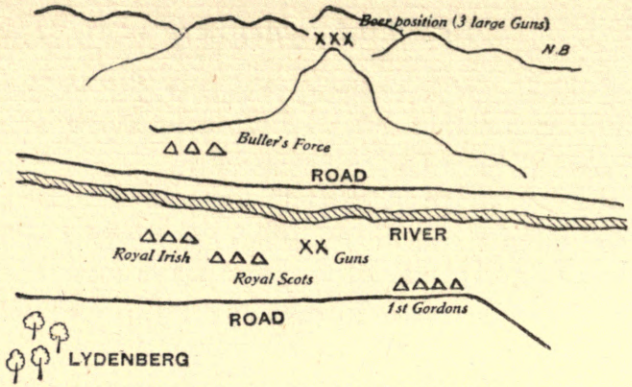
O.C. here. We have a very easy time, just looking after the railways, etc. I had an interview with Kitchener when I was commanding.

I went off ten miles south yesterday patrolling right into Swaziland, and held a great *indaba* with an old Swazi chief. He received me in state, and before I left solemnly presented me with a fowl and some eggs.

The Colonel with five companies is near Kumati Poort, and we expect that shortly they will come up the line, pick us up, and we shall all go on to Pretoria, or perhaps come home.

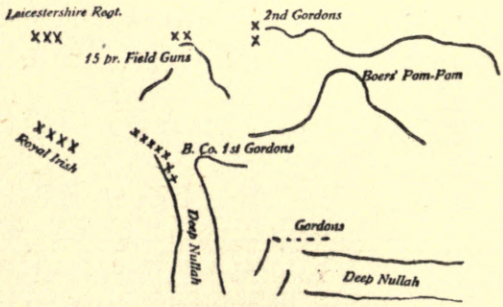
The troops are all to leave this district if possible before the rains, as it is fearfully unhealthy in the rainy season—just like the west coast. There is a lot of game about, and I get some shooting—I am extremely fit.

There was a fearful accident the other day at Kumati Poort—an explosion in which we had two men killed and many injured. Davis got knocked over, but not badly hurt, luckily. Accompanying sketch is very rough, but may assist you in understanding description.



THE CAMP AT LYDENBERG.
September 7th, 1900.

THE ADVANCE ON THE PAARDEPLAATS UNDER GENERAL BULLER. *September 8th*, 1900.



POSITION OF TROOPS DURING BATTLE.

REGIMENTAL LIFE DURING WAR

CHAPTER V

REGIMENTAL LIFE DURING WAR: OCTOBER, 1900—JANUARY, 1901

Belfast in the Transvaal.

BELFAST.

October 20th, 1900.

SINCE writing you we have left the low veldt and come back here—some three thousand feet above sea-level. The rainy season has commenced, and we are now in tents for the first time. There are three of us in my tent—Lumsden, Duff and myself. Lumsden, who is at present transport officer, had the arranging of the tents, and managed to get us together, as we are great friends, the three of us. Dingwall is away at present on duty at Pretoria, so I am commanding the company, and although there is no drill it keeps me fairly busy—there is a great deal more in a company officer's work than one would imagine.

We are going off again presently—more fighting, so we are told, under Smith-Dorrien. We expect to go the day after to-morrow. We shall leave our tents behind us and take our small bivouacs with us. We had a small race-meeting the other day, and I

rode in the steeplechases. In the first one I was riding second, and making up on the leading man, but my pony fell at the last jump—no damage. In the second steeplechase I got in third. Then we had sports, and our regiment took five first prizes and seven seconds out of seven events.

BELFAST. (ON PICKET.)
November 7th, 1900.

Still at Belfast. The Brigade went out for a night attack the other day—in the most fearful weather—pouring with rain and a cold wind. They attacked the Boer position, but something went wrong with the second column, which should have been in rear of the Boers, and instead came up behind my regiment. So the General ordered the Brigade to retire. Two of our companies, H and G, fought a rear-guard action and lost one man killed and eight wounded, including Gardyne, who was shot through the left thigh—merely a flesh wound.

The rest of the regiment was not in action at all, but had a fearful march in most appalling weather. (I was left in charge of the camp as I happened to be orderly officer the day the column left. I had 115 men, and fifty men on picket in the town, so I had my hands full.) They left about 7 o'clock one evening and returned twenty-four hours later dead beat. Another column went out yesterday but my regiment is left here this time.

I am on outlying picket S.E. of the town, with my

own company, of which I am in command, and half of C Company and a subaltern. I can hear the guns of the column as I sit here in my tent. As soon as this column returns the Gordons will go out to San Seneschal, where Buller is with some guns and a large force. The fighting seems endless. They say we may be here for six months yet, so please do not stop sending tobacco and cigarettes.

I am improving my spare time on picket by learning signalling, which I consider every officer should know. I have just had a helio message from the General that he has twenty-five casualties, and that the Boers have five guns. Those messages I send in by mounted orderlies of the 5th Lancers, placed at my disposal. By the firing, I do not think the column is doing anything great.

BELFAST.

November 21st, 1900.

Since writing you last we have been away on the march again. I was commanding a company with a subaltern under me. We were sniped at every day, and had one day's very pretty shelling. The enemy showed themselves on a ridge, and the guns searched out every corner, so that when the infantry advanced they found the position deserted. We had two 5-inch guns, four 15-pounders, and two pom-poms. I was a scout to the first guns. The only really hot firing was at a flank-guard of which I was in command. We moved over very difficult

ground—occupying a high ridge of hills about 1200 feet high, while the column moved through the Pass. I had too few men but the C.O. could not send me any more. I kept them off, however, and made them retire—but once we had it very hot. I had to risk keeping them back with a very few men while I turned their flank with the remainder. They then fled, and we pelted them as they ran. I did not like it, for if they had come through and sniped the column I should have been blamed.

We were out for five days altogether, doing about sixty miles. We have no idea when we may get home, but it may be months yet. How I long to see you all again. I am going to send you a picture Gordon Duff made of me lying in our tent. He was down at Bloemfontein for a few days and got it framed and told me to send it to my mother. We are great friends. We are all being kept at signalling just now—three hours a day—the subalterns only. Davis is still in hospital at Pretoria, but he should be back shortly.

BELFAST.

November 26th, 1900.

Here I am on picket again. This time my company (which I am still commanding as Dingwall is still away), is split up between two pickets—as each picket has a company and a half. I am with the right half company, and G company, the whole being under Captain Allan.

The grass is now beautifully green, and the view from our tent is very fine—green rolling plains, and the hills along the Kumati Valley in the far distance. Beautiful flowers are now growing up—quite wild—and we have made our tent quite gay with them. I arranged them this morning—one bunch in an empty tin cigarette box—and another in an empty jam pot. The heat to-day is very great, high up though we are, and we hear it is terrific lower down, in Pretoria, etc.

We are having a gymkhana on Wednesday, consisting of a steeplechase (in which I am riding the doctor's pony), and various other events, including a race in which you ride in a waterproof and get off your pony half-way, light a cigar, and ride back—and so on.

As we shall probably not leave this country for some time, and shall certainly be here for Christmas, please send me some Scotch bun and shortbread and so on. Also, you might send me the photo. that was taken of my horse Gibel Tarik.

December 4th, 1900.

Since I wrote last we have been out on another column and had one day's fighting. I was again doing flank-guard with half my company, Dingwall being in support with the other half. Somehow we missed each other and the Cavalry retired, leaving me on a ledge by myself in a hot fire. I blessed the Cavalry, and sat tight blazing away until a

battery came up and shelled the Boers, and I went on after the column.

I have just been put on the Mess Committee—a beastly job—and one gets no thanks, but is blamed by everybody—as I have explained to you before.

BELFAST.

December 11th, 1900.

Here I am still at this place, and as far as we can see we are likely to remain here for some time. There is no news about our going home. I have not yet sent off the picture I told you of, but am now sending it carefully packed up in a wooden box together with a small souvenir box, one of which was given to each of us, and is an interesting memento. The picture is for my mother.

It may interest you to know how we spend the day here.

At 6.30 we get gun-fire, *i.e.*—cup of tea, cocoa, or coffee.

Rise about 7.30.

Breakfast at 8 a.m.

Signalling class, 9-10.

Office—inspection of arms and company lines, 10-11.

Signalling again, 11.30.

Between 3 and 4.30 we generally ride, or write or read.

4.30-6 hockey, football, etc.

7.15 Mess.

Bed about 9.30-10.

A healthy life.

Three companies are always on picket about one to two miles from camp. Every three days another three companies relieve them. Duff and I keep a pony between us which we got in a present. Davis has not yet rejoined, but has been sent to Port Elizabeth to recruit.

Please give my Christmas greetings to all our friends.

We had a great night not long ago—St. Andrew's night. We decorated our mess tent with flowers and made the place beautiful, and had a slap-up dinner—soup, fish, entrée, turkey, plum-pudding, champagne, port, whisky and soda. The General was there and a lot of other guests. We had great fun. The men also had a feed and extra issue of rum.

January 2nd, 1901.

We are having a quiet time just now, as we have not been on the march or doing any fighting for some weeks. In the mornings from 9 a.m. till 12.30 we have various duties, but in the afternoons, unless one is orderly officer or on picket or some other extra duty, one has one's time pretty much to oneself. Then we ride or play hockey or cricket or football. We had a great night last night, New Year's Day—singing and so on. I sang two verses of my hunting song—on all these occasions this being all I can remember of my large répertoire.

I am going out this afternoon to build a small fort which I have designed for the greater protection of the camp.

I have some great chums in my regiment now —Davis, Lumsden, and Alexander are my chief friends. Poor Davis has been away now for about three months and is convalescent at Cape Town. He will be back shortly I expect. I got your lovely cards from Italy, and they make our tent quite bright. I share a tent with Duff and Lumsden, but as one of us is nearly always on picket there are generally only two of us living in it at one time.

I fear that we may not be home for a long time yet. I do not see how we can possibly leave Africa for four or five months yet—at soonest. Where we shall go when we do come home we have no idea—except that it is almost certain to be one of four places—Edinboro', Glasgow, York, or Aldershot.

BELFAST.

January 16*th*, 1901.

I have not written for several mails, as I have not had one moment's time. After the attack on Helvetiae the General insisted—very rightly—that all the outposts should be fortified, and I, with two other officers, was struck off the strength in order to superintend the building. I went round first of all with the Colonel and the Adjutant.

We have been at it now for about fourteen days A good job we began it, as a few days after we began

the outposts were attacked—an account of which I shall write when more time. I was sent with B company to the guns, which were expected to be rushed any moment. We could not see a yard in front for the mist, and just lay with fixed bayonets and waited. We lost three killed on the outposts. Just now we start at 8.30 to 1 ; then 1.45 to 6 p.m. ; dinner at 7, bed as soon as possible, and every other night stand to arms 2 till 5. We are all about washed out.

I am exceedingly well and happy but tired out. There goes the fall in for afternoon. Shall write a long letter as soon as possible.

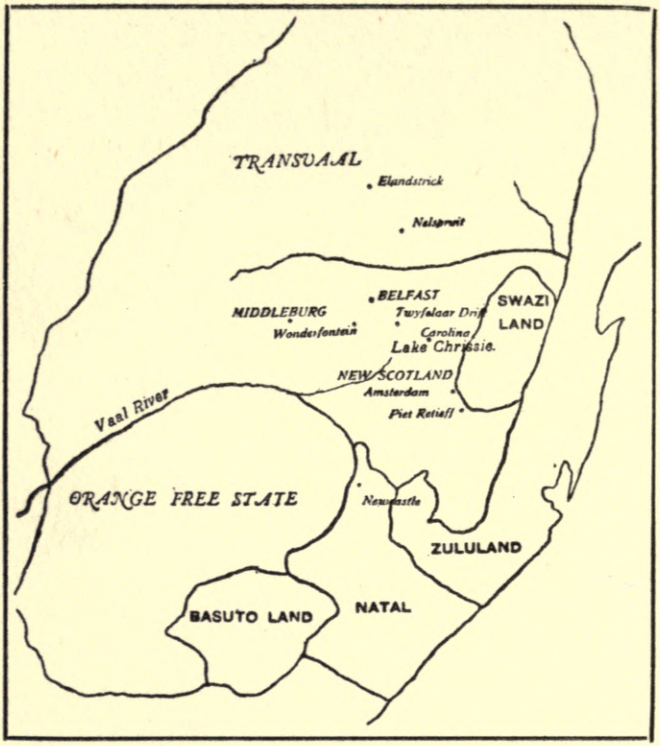
BELFAST,
SOUTH AFRICA.
January 21st, 1901.

I have just had rather a piece of luck. A column is going out from Wonderfontein a few miles from here, consisting of about 4000 infantry and 2000 cavalry with guns—altogether I should think about 7000-8000 men. My regiment is not going, as they cannot deplete any of the garrisons. However, the O.C. Infantry asked the Colonel for an A.D.C., and the Colonel offered me the job. Of course, I jumped at it. So I shall be off doing A.D.C. and may get a chance of doing something. We are going—I understand—to do battle with Viljoen. We start from here—the General and myself—early to-morrow morning for Wonderfontein by train.

The Boers seem very full of buck just now. The other day they simultaneously attacked all down the line but in every case were beaten off. It was a fearful night—thick mist. We could only see a few yards. They were desperate men. They crept up to within a few yards of the pickets without being seen, and in some cases rushed in under the sangar—*i.e.* a wall of stones with loop-holes—and, seizing the men's rifles, crawled over the top down on to the bayonets. Some seem absolutely indifferent to life. I suppose all they have to live for is gone. The leader in one case was a Glasgow man—and many of those who attacked our regimental outposts were Scotch and English. The difficulty at present I imagine is the fighting line quartered on the lines of communication, and there is practically no fighting line.

A.D.C. TO GENERAL SPENS

February 17th, 1901—*June*, 1902



FIRST OPERATIONS WITH GENERAL SPENS' BRIGADE

Subjugation of the New Scotland and Carolina Districts in the Transvaal with Battles of Twyfelaar Drift and Lake Chrissie.

CHAPTER VI

A.D.C. TO GENERAL SPENS: FEBRUARY—JUNE, 1901

March from Wonderfontein to Battle at Twyfelaar Drift—Amsterdam near Swaziland—Battle of Lake Chrissie—Derby, near Piet Retieff—Belfast—Nelspruit—Elandstrick.

AMSTERDAM,
NEAR SWAZILAND,
SOUTH AFRICA.
February 17th, 1901.

I HAVE so much to tell you that I fear I cannot do justice to it all in one letter—as time is always short. I shall, however, go as far as I can and go on in my next letter from where I leave off in this one. I think in my last letter I told you I had been appointed galloper, or A.D.C., to Colonel Spens, who was to command the Infantry Brigade in a division under General Smith-Dorrien, leaving Wonderfontein, and to proceed in a southerly direction for the subjugation of the Carolina-Ermelo and New Scotland districts, where some 6000 Boers under General Botha were located. This column was to work in conjunction with some five or six other columns, and the general plan of operations was most interesting—

but I could not explain to you unless sitting beside you with a map.

We marched out from Wonderfontein on January 26th, the column consisting of four infantry battalions under Col. Spens, 1st Suffolks, 1st Essex, 2nd West Yorks, 1st Cameron Highlanders. The four battalions numbered about 3400 men. We have also three five wide guns and eight field guns—and three pom-poms—under Colonel Bell-Irving, R.A. The mounted troops, including the 5th Lancers, Imperial Light Horse, 18th Hussars, and 3rd and 4th M.I., were under Colonel Henry.

We marched seventeen miles to a place (a farm) called Twyfelaar, where we had a nasty action. The Boers were in a very strong position in a kloof or valley, where they had a pom-pom and some five to eight hundred men. The M.I. went round about ten miles to turn their flanks and the Suffolk Regiment, who were advance guard, advanced on the position. The Boers had the range, and the Suffolks were compelled to halt as the fire was very hot.

In carrying a message from Colonel Spens to the officer commanding the Suffolk firing line I found that the fire was really very hot, and that an advance meant many casualties. This officer stood up to take my message, and as I was sitting on my horse they were pelting at me for all they were worth, and, unfortunately, as soon as he stood up, he was almost immediately killed—shot through the

heart and lungs. He was a very nice man, a Major Lloyd, and I think one of the smartest and pluckiest officers in that regiment.

I was lucky that day as I was up at the firing line several times and, although offering an excellent mark, was never touched, but the bullets fairly hummed round me.

Colonel Spens gave me his despatches in that action to read yesterday, and he has been good enough to mention me as follows :—" I regret to report the death of Major Lloyd, Suffolk Regiment—a valuable officer who was killed while receiving a message from my galloper, Lieutenant Miller, Gordon Highlanders. This officer behaved very gallantly (or, " with great gallantry ") carrying messages to the firing line several times under a heavy fire." This is called being " mentioned in Despatches."

I am glad that I have been mentioned, as I know that it will please you and my mother. I shall go on from this point in my next letter—and just say that we have since been trekking and having small actions. I do not expect to get back to the regiment, which is still garrisoning Belfast, for a long time yet. This letter will possibly never reach you, but I hope it may.

Note.—In the action where Major Lloyd was killed a bullet pierced David's helmet; one struck his shoulder strap and another his stirrup.

DERBY,
NEAR PIET RETIEFF,
SOUTH AFRICA.
March 10th, 1901.

I trust you got my last letter about which I have some doubts. I left off there—just after the action at Twyfelaar. We went on next day to Carolina, which we entered without opposition—at least, nothing to speak of. We remained there one day and buried our dead. Then we started back for Wonderfontein.

The orderly has just come in to say that the mail is closing, so must shut up—but will continue writing as I have a spare afternoon. I will just say that I am very well, and still on the trek as A.D.C. Infantry Brigade. We are part of general movement under General French—with whom I had lunch the other day, when I went over to see him with Colonel Spens. Next letter long one.

DERBY,
NEAR PIET RETIEFF,
SOUTH AFRICA.
March 10th, 1901.

I shall now continue where I have just broken off. We left Carolina next day, and began our return march to Wonderfontein—as this march was just a preliminary to the general movement. We fought a rear-guard action that day—and got back into

Twyfelaar late at night. Next day we continued our march, and halted for the night at Strathray. We remained there a day and buried our dead, and then went into Wonderfontein where we remained some days getting stores preparatory to the big march.

The 44th (1st Essex) left us here, and reduced our brigade to three battalions—namely, 1st Camerons—1st Suffolks—2nd West Yorks. Well, off we went again towards Carolina, but by a slightly different route. At the same time Colonel Campbell, 60th Rifles, with two guns, some mounted infantry, and the Lincolnshire regiment, moved out from Middleburg on our right flank. He had Pulteney with half battalion Dublin Fusiliers, some guns, 10th Hussars, and some M.I. on his right. Pulteney, again, had Dartwell with mounted infantry on his right. Alderson with 1000 mounted infantry was between and a little in advance of Campbell and Pulteney. Allenby, with the Scots Greys, some guns and a few infantry on the extreme right. Burn-Murdoch was meanwhile advancing from Newcastle, Natal. The front covered by this force was something enormous, and the feeding of such a large number of men and animals—as we had no railway—a really stupendous undertaking.

We had no fighting this time, really, until we left Carolina for Lake Chrissie. We camped beside the lake at a small place called Bothwell—after the Scotch town of that name. I think I forgot to say

that Bryant (lieutenant) of the Shropshire L.I. —an excellent fellow—had joined the brigade as signalling officer. He and I shared one tent. That night I was wakened by hearing a hot fire going on, and the bullets fairly humming about, coming through the tents. Bryant and I jumped out of bed, and got on some things and found Higginson (the Brigade Major) and the Colonel out. We saw some men rushing back from the direction of the outpost lines, and asked them where the attack was, but they were absolutely panic-stricken. We tried to rally them, but to no purpose. One sat down and began to cry like a child. Then we left them and Bryant went up in the direction of the W. Yorks, and Higginson and I got well peppered in a small wood. We found the Camerons and Suffolks all right, and firing away briskly, and quietened the people at the guns.

At one time I was sure the Boers were right inside the camp, but I am sure now they were not. The infantry (our brigade) behaved splendidly, more especially the W. Yorks and Camerons. Passing through all the confusion, and so on, it was splendid to come on the infantry as cool and brave as possible. Just as I came up to the firing line, the Cameron Highlanders rushed past me cheering with their bayonets fixed, lay down and fired, then up and on again.

The Boers, to the number of 2000 under Louis and Christian Botha, Ben Viljoen and Delarey, had

attacked us at two in the morning, and rushed through the outpost line. Hence the terrific fire inside. The W. Yorks lost twenty-four men and one officer killed, and forty men and officers wounded. The Camerons lost, I think, about fourteen, and the Suffolks about twelve. Also many M.I., cavalry and gunners were killed inside the camp, and numberless horses and mules. Bryant was shot in the foot, but not badly.

I shall go on from here next letter as letter will be too long.

PIET RETIEFF,
SOUTH AFRICA.
March 26th.

Your most interesting letters have just arrived, and as I had not had a mail for nine weeks you may imagine how I prized them. I am living in a charming house, with the Brigadier and the Brigade Major. We live well as we have just had stores sent up. I look after the feeding, and can sympathise with housekeepers. Soldier cooks and waiters are extraordinary people, and do most extraordinary things.

I am sitting at the open window of the bed-room I share with the Brigade Major, looking out on a pretty garden and a belt of cypress trees—having first lunched off beef-steak, chocolate pudding, stewed fruit, scones, jam, and a bottle of claret; so I am not to be pitied. This luxury arises from the fact that I am on the headquarter staff, and

that as I am remaining here a week or two we have a house and got up some stores. I also draw good pay—I believe 25s. per day. Cigarettes are what I most want. When you send me a box, if you would enclose a couple of hundred cigarettes, I should be immensely grateful. Just before we arrived here we had nothing to eat, except meat and mealie—no bread, no tea, no anything. So we are having a burst.

PIET RETIEFF, S.A.
March 26th.

I am on a staff billet just now as you are aware—namely, A.D.C. Infantry Brigade, Smith-Dorrien's force. It was a great compliment to me selecting me for this job. I have had a letter from Captain Gordon, V.C., the Adjutant, which I will not send, as I wish to keep it always, and am afraid it may get lost. He says: "I hear you have behaved—as I knew you would do—absolutely fearless," referring to the action where poor Major Lloyd of the Suffolks was killed. Poor Lloyd! he has left a wife and two small children—boy and girl. His father was also killed in action. The war comes hard on the women, poor things. Please regard this extract from Captain Gordon's letter as "very private." My mother will be pleased at the praise—not quite deserved, I fear—which has been accorded to me by so brave a man.

How long I shall continue on the Staff I do not

know, but shall probably remain with Colonel Spens as long as he commands a Brigade. Since the action at Lake Chrissie we have had much marching and privation, but not much fighting on the way back. The war is at last drawing to a close, but we have had to take severe measures. All the women and children have been taken and sent off to various places, and numberless homes destroyed. I have seen many pitiful sights—such as make the heart bleed—but are unavoidable. War, as I have said before, is a fearful thing. I have now been on the fighting line for nearly a year, and I have seen what may make a man think. To go into details of our wanderings would be impossible, so I only tell you the outstanding events.

The cook, a private in His Majesty's army, has just told me the mail bag is closing, so I must also close. How glad I am that you have had a good time. There are many poor mothers and sisters here—Boers—that it is well for you you cannot see. There is an old body here, a Mrs. M'Millan from Tarbet, Loch Fyne. They used to torment her here—the Boers—telling her we were beaten and so on. I found her crying, watching the Cameron Highlanders marching by playing the " Camerons' Gathering " on the pipes.

" Eh, ma lamb," says she to me, " A tell't them A wud hear the pipes in Piet Retieff, and hear till that, noo ! "

Poor body, many of her tormentors lay dead away

to the north, bayonetted by these same Camerons. Many more lay bound in Piet Retieff jail.

Must stop.

PIET RETIEFF,
SOUTH AFRICA.
April 13th, 1901.

I am having a splendid time just now. An A.D.C.'s work is very easy, and very nice, especially under such a General as Colonel Spens. Colonel Spens really commands the 85th Shropshire L.I. —one of the best regiments in the army—and has been selected to command an Infantry brigade for good service, with local rank of Field Colonel, complimentary rank of General. He is a splendid officer, of the greatest personal bravery, and excellent as a commander in the field. I have now been three months with him, and shall probably remain with him so long as he commands a brigade. I think this war is at last drawing to a close. The Boers will not fight now, and all this part of the country should be uninhabitable, as we destroy stores and crops as we go along. We are returning to Wonderfontein shortly via Carolina, and will probably take part in the operations north of the line.

I keep the most extraordinary good health—never ill. We have a jolly little house here and give dinner-parties, and as I am housekeeper I have anxious moments. How I long to be home with you all once more! But I feel I am getting on a

little now, as serving on the staff in the field is always a good thing. On the other hand, staff billets, such as railway staff officer (a stationmaster) and stationary billets at Headquarters offices are, I consider, bad,—with all the wasted opportunities of experience in the field and lack of opportunity of getting any small incentive.

You will not hear from me for some weeks as I am off into the veldt.

BELFAST.
May 6th.

Here I am back from the long trek.

When I got back Colonel MacBean wired for me to be sent back to my regiment which is doing convoy duty between Machadorp and Lydenberg, but Col. Spens (who has now been made C.B., Brevet Colonel, and A.D.C. to the King) asked that I should remain with him as he has been given the command of a small division of all arms now concentrating at Wonderfontein, and he wishes to keep me as A.D.C.! His letter to Colonel MacBean about me was very complimentary indeed—in fact something "special." I went down to see my regiment for a day, and one of the subalterns told me that the Colonel had told them about it, and said that I had been recommended by Colonel Spens (or General Smith-Dorrien) for the Distinguished Service Order, for conspicuous gallantry in the field. This decoration is, from a soldier's point of view, the best

decoration in the army. It is given either for long, arduous and meritorious service in the field or for an individual act of gallantry. But it is hard for one so junior as myself to get it, and although recommended I may not get it. I shall not know for some months probably—perhaps not till the end of the war, so do not be saying anything about it for a short time. Of course, the fact of being recommended is an excellent thing in itself, especially for personal gallantry.

The act I was recommended for was on the 27th (I think) of January, 1901, "displaying conspicuous gallantry in the face of the enemy by carrying messages to the firing line under a heavy rifle and pom-pom shell fire,—being mounted while so doing." A firing-line is, of course, lying down and practically invisible to the enemy, and if advancing does so by short rushes—so that galloping up is attended with risk, as one draws fire at once. In this case the fire was so heavy and the place so exposed, that the infantry found it impossible to go on.

I am in the best of health, and in great spirits. I may tell you very privately. . . .

Believe me when I tell you that I care more for praise inasmuch as it is sure to please you and my father and the smallest one than I do for myself. I have seen so many sad scenes, and known of so many acts of gallantry unrecognised that decorations seem a very empty thing.

A.D.C. to General Spens

NELSPRUIT, S.A.

June 9th, 1901.

Here I am in the very best of health and spirits.

I am afraid I have been very slack about writing to people at home outside yourselves. I always write you at every opportunity, but I may say that I am kept rushing about more than most, and have fewer opportunities than most others. However, this is as it should be. I am keen on my profession, and have been very lucky, and any amount of hard work in connection with soldiering never comes amiss. I am rather a swell in my own way now, and am having a rare good time.

So J. T. is going to China. Well—well. The army is full of change. One day here and the next at the ends of the earth. He was a good chap, and if he makes as good a soldier as he was a friend he will get along " Floreat."

This is a charming place—wonderful hills all round, and a beautiful tropical river—the same which ran past my old station at Maalane—the Crocodile—flowing along the valley. The hills are covered with more or less dense tropical bush, and the grass is long, rank, and yellow, but still affords excellent feeding for cattle. The custom of the Boers has always been to drive their cattle into the low veldt in the winter months when all the grass in the high veldt is burnt, and thus obtain good feeding for them all the year round. The Boers in the field are now in a desperate case. I have seen many

prisoners lately with clothes so patched that we had difficulty in telling which were clothes and which were patches. These wretched people have made a fearful mistake in continuing the war, but they are so unbelievably credulous that they believe the monstrous lies told by their commanders, who, many of them, have nothing to lose by remaining in commando, and if they surrender know that they will be under very close surveillance, if not actual confinement. It is also impossible to exaggerate the harm done by pro-Boer English papers. Of course they have not much access to such things now, but still they are smuggled out through friendly Boers in the towns by niggers to those on commando: and they read that the country is divided against itself, and suchlike nonsense, which they believe. I do not believe myself that are more than 8-1200 fighting Boers left, and they are coming in at about the rate of 100 a day, including killed, wounded and surrendered. The thing is near its close. There is no doubt of this, but we shall probably be here for some considerable time (4 to 6 months).

NELSPRUIT, S.A.
June 9th, 1901.

I am afraid I have not written you for a long time, but I really have not been able, as I have been running about here and there exceedingly busy. This is now our headquarters. It is a station on the line between Kumati Poort and Pretoria, but

very much nearer to Kumati Poort. You will find it on the map. General Spens has made this his headquarters, as it is central for the operations he has been entrusted with, namely, the subjugation of the districts round Lydenberg, and east to the Silati Valley—a very big business. He has now been given a very large command—consisting of four columns, one under Colonel Douglas, one under Colonel Benson, and two under Colonel Park, C.B., A.D.C.—in all comprising about 3-4 battalions—13-14 batteries, and about 2000 mounted men. a large command as things go and all under his direct command. He has been made a Brig.-General, and is also C.B., A.D.C., so we have gone up in the world a bit.

The staff now consists of Capt. Higginson, D.S.O., as Chief Staff Officer; Captain Radcliffe as Provost-Marshal; Lieutenant Smith-Dorrien (nephew to the General), as Transport Officer; Lieutenant Bryant as signalling officer; and myself as A.D.C. As a matter of fact I have the best time of the lot, as I go everywhere with the General. I have a great deal of office work to do now—as the correspondence is pretty heavy—and there are all kinds of things to keep right,—maps and all kinds of things. Altogether I am having an extraordinary variety of experience, and have been exceptionally lucky in getting this appointment. I have now been on the Staff close on five months, and am likely to remain so till General Spens goes to India, which he might

likely do in 3-4 months, when I should return to my regiment. All my brother staff-officers are very charming, and I am especially fond of Higginson and Bryant. We have an awfully good time, you know—feeding of the best, plenty of good ponies, all kinds of luxuries.

We go out to-morrow on a ten days' trek north to catch one Jan de Beer, who is sitting on a kopje two or three days' march from here. The whole four columns are moving on his position, surrounding him. We go out with the centre column, and the General directs the whole. I hope we may catch him!

To give you some idea of the extent of our front I may say that the distance between the right and left flank columns is about sixty miles, or about fifteen miles further than from Glasgow to Edinburgh. Being with the General, studying the maps when all this is worked out, and supplies and animals arranged for, and intelligence as to roads, etc., brought in is, as you may imagine, of the greatest possible interest to me. As to the war generally it is unquestionably near the end. These people are being chased and harried like foxes, and are surrendering every day.

The headquarters of the Boer Goot is now four wagons painted red sitting on the veldt near Volksrust. That affair of Dirius seems to have been a sharp thing—no doubt you have read of it in the papers. Our people buried fifty-one Boers them-

selves after the action—so they got something. But we lost pretty heavily—fifty-nine killed. Of course a series of actions of this kind would finish the war, as fifty men more or less is nothing to us but a great deal to the Boers, especially as the Boers killed are in almost every case their leaders (fighting cornets) and best men.

NELSPRUIT.

June 9th, 1901.

I got your charming birthday gift, also my mother's—the pencil-case is extremely useful, and the book most amusing, and the cover really very pretty. It was much admired by the staff. Jolly good pen this. It is the fountain pen the small one gave me before leaving, and marvellous to say is still to the fore, having been lost countless times. One thing that has gone through everything with me is Aunt Mina's rug, and it is still in excellent preservation, although worn in places, and some what faded. It is even now on my small camp-bed. My jaeger bag (flea-bags we call them) is also going strong. We never wash them, so I expect it may become fruity in another year or so. Nailing good job I'm in just now. Plenty of everything—deuce of a swell—easy work—good wages—Haw!

I bet I have a better time than you. Mid-winter here,—warm, sunny days, just the least bite in the air in the mornings. Breakfast, two hot, one cold course, tea, hot toast, oranges, pine-apples. Lunch—

everything on side table, hot and cold,—potatoes, vegetables, whisky and soda, cigars, cigarettes. Dinner—five courses, and fruit, smoke, coffee. What do you think? I have been where there was less—out here.

I keep most extraordinary health—never anything wrong. The General and I are the healthiest. He is a splendid old boy. I'm very fond of him. You would like him, so cheery he always is. He's a swell now—General, and C.B., A.D.C. to the King. I am always with him of course. When he dines with Bugs I dine with Bugs also—awful swell I am! Oh! fearful!

Must be winding up now—got some work to do—office work. I may not have another chance of writing for a long time, as we're off in the morning after Jan de Beers, through a fearful country.

So Fleming is coming out? Well done, young Fleming. I feel quite proud of him.

ELANDSTRICK,
SOUTH AFRICA.
June 23rd, 1901.

We have just returned from a ten days' trek in wild and lovely country, but one which presented enormous difficulties to movements of troops. Huge mountains,—great deep valleys,—frightful roads. We compelled the Boers to abandon their wagons and stock amounting to 2500 cattle, 1200 sheep,

150 wagons and stores of clothing, blankets, and provisions. We killed seven Boers and captured twenty-two, but the rest got off with their horses. They hide in great deep kloofs in daytime, and escape by terrible paths during the night.

The General has now come in here, which he is making his headquarters. The columns, five of them, under Benson, Douglas, Parke, Binney and M'Crasken are still out, but he can work them better from the line. The movement will continue for ten days yet, and then the General goes to Hector Spruit, and headquarters will move out again with Douglas and Burney for subjugation of Silati Valley. After that I expect the General will go to Pretoria to see Lord K. Of course, as A.D.C., I go everywhere with him.

It is possible I may be seconded for the staff. I am not certain. Of course I should be and could be, but it is—well, a step of sorts, and requires consideration.

My regiment is going to Pretoria to garrison for a time. There is a strong rumour that 2500 troops are going home in August and that my regiment is of the lot, but this may be, and very likely is, mere rumour. In any case if General Spens remains here I should probably remain with him.

There was a smart action in the Free State the other day, in which we lost ten men, and one of five of a M.I. company killed, and fifteen wounded, and they seem to have done all right.

CHAPTER VII

A.D.C. TO GENERAL SPENS: JULY, 1901—JANUARY, 1902

Blinkwater, north of Wonderfontein—Operations round about Roos Snekal, Lydenberg and surrounding districts—Heilbron, Orange River Colony—Kroonstadt—near Vryheid—Majuba Hill, Laing's Nek, Rorke's Drift—Isandlwana—Newcastle—Standerton, Transvaal—Magensen—Amersfort—Beginderliju Bridge.

BLINKWATER,
NORTH OF WONDERFONTEIN.
July 12th, 1901.

WE are now engaged in very interesting operations round about Roos Snekal, Lydenberg and surrounding districts. My General has now three columns: one commanded by Colonel Benson, over 2000 strong, with eight guns, and one under Colonel Park, about 1500 strong, and five guns, and one commanded by the General of about 1500 men and four guns. My General has been doing very well indeed, and Lord Kitchener is awfully pleased. We—the General and I—will probably go down to Pretoria after these operations are over to see Lord K. We shall finish about July 25th. We have had very little fighting as the Boers seem to have no spirit left at all.

A.D.C. to General Spens

Benson's column got into Viljoen's commando some days ago and chased them for miles—about thirty-five miles as hard as they could leg it—but the Boer horses are always so much fresher than ours that riding them down is almost an impossibility. People at home no doubt think it a circumstance requiring some explanation that the Boer horses should on nearly all occasions have the better of ours in a chase, but this is not at all owing to faulty horses on our side, as I should say our horses are stronger, faster, and better fed than the Boers', but it is owing to the fact that our mounted infantry have nearly always done twenty or thirty miles over rough ground before coming into contact with the enemy—who in the meantime have been lying in the position they have chosen until they think it time to go, and then, with fresh horses, they easily have the legs of us. They are now fighting a savage kind of warfare—*i.e.*, lying hid if possible until the columns pass, sniping a little and so on, and if they see any small party out of touch with the main body trying to cut it off.

You ask if I have been gazetted A.D.C.—not yet, but ought to be presently as my name has gone in. The chief staff-officer did not send it in till the other day, although the General thought he had done so ages ago. He forgot, I think. I had an inkling that he had forgotten, but did not bustle him, be-because gazetting means seconding (probably), and seconding for the staff means that the War Office

can shoot you into either battalion after your staff appointment expires. Now, I want to stay in the 75th for the present.

Seconding for the staff is not, in many ways, a desirable thing. It is the greatest mistake to imagine that being on the staff is a great thing—nothing of the sort. Railway staff-officers — or stationmasters as they really are—are all seconded for the staff, and a poorer billet or one less likely to lead to either advancement or experience could not be imagined; and there are many others of a similar nature where you are cooped up in towns, and then good-bye to advancement or experience in the field. An A.D.C. to a General of mobile columns is the best staff appointment in the army.

HEILBRON,
ORANGE RIVER COLONY.
August 5th, 1901.

Here I am full of beans in the River Colony, late Free State. The Boers are now all split up in small bodies, and are hard to catch. We chase them about, and bring in all their stock, etc. One sees many extraordinary scenes. The other day we discovered several families living in a great hole in a rock by the banks of the Vaal River. They are living entirely on fresh meat and mealie meal. The prisoners are, for the most, in a frightful state of destitution—clothes made of blankets patched with bits of tablecloth or carpet. These people

are still deluded by the belief that England is nearly bankrupt, that we cannot continue to feed our army much longer, that Russians have taken England, etc., etc. One would scarcely believe their ignorance unless one actually came in contact with it.

It would be hard for you to describe a battle—there is so little to describe. The infantry soldier sees nothing except the men on either side of him and the ground in front. He hears the crackle of the enemy's fire somewhere—he does not know where—he hears the whit! whit! of the bullets, and every now and then he knows vaguely some one near him is hit—he feels the smell of the powder (cordite) and the hot oily smell of his rifle. He fires at the range given, and at the given direction, and every now and then he hears "Advance!" and he gets up and goes on and wonders why he is not hit as he stands up. That is all. Then the bullets cease to come and the action is over, and the company get—"On the right (or centre), close!" and he marches to the chosen camping ground and perhaps goes on picket—very tired and dirty—and he does it all again next day. That is the infantry soldier's battle—very nasty—very tiring—very greasy—very hungry—very thirsty—everything very beastly. No glitter—no excitement—no nothing. Just bullets and dirt.

It is a rotten game for Private T. Atkins of the infantry of the Line. They've been at it here for

nearly two years off and on. They are not praised but slanged if they make mistakes. They bury their friends, and see them dumped into a big hole rolled in a blanket, and they wait wearily for the end. But they go on doing it, all right. That is war—dirt, weariness, death, disease, bullets. Don't try and make it anything else in a book.

I am very happy, and having a splendid time in the gilded staff.

HEILBRON,
ORANGE RIVER COLONY.
August 5th, 1901.

I cannot remember exactly when I last wrote, but it must be some time ago, as I have not had a minute to do anything for ever so long. I think I wrote from Blinkwater, when we were chasing Viljoen's commando. We got into him at Wagendrift, and picked up four killed Boers—but the main body got away. When we reached the railway Lord K. wired my General to come and take over a column at Heidelberg, bringing only his personal staff, so Bryant and Radcliffe (who had taken Higginson's place) about three months before had to go back to their regiment and I came on at once with the General. We had one day in Pretoria and bought a lot of things—boots, etc. —and my General gave a dinner at night at which Col. MacBean was present. I ordered the dinner and did them slap up. Great fun we had.

We trekked from Heidelberg on July 27th and came here, clearing the country as we came. We surprised two Boer laagers in the dark and brought in 1800 sheep, 5000 cattle, and about 80 prisoners besides killing some. We had very few casualties.

We are off after De Wet to-morrow morning.

KROONSTADT.

August 14th, 1901.

You wonder in your last if I have changed in appearance. I am fairly thin, and I seem to have changed in expression somehow but can't spot it myself. However, you will no doubt see for yourself presently—unless they second me for the staff, and shoot me into the 92nd, when I should require to go to India. I should fight against this—as I want to come home for a short time at any rate. Of course, ultimately I must go to the 92nd, as it is bad for young officers to be holding up barrack walls at home. But really anything might happen to me.

My General has done very well in the march from Heidelberg here, as we surprised two laagers in the dark and took many prisoners and much cattle and sheep and wagons. I am strongly of opinion when the leaders come in, *i.e.* De Wet and Botha, etc., that afterwards there will not be another shot fired. Others are, I know, of opinion that many malcontents will remain out independently, but I think not. I am seeing a lot of country just now

as you may see from my letters—if you follow me on the map.

We are resting here for three days before continuing our trek, I drove the General into the station to-day in our Cape cart (sort of polo cart with a hood) and pair of ponies, to meet General Alderson. We all lunched together at the station, and I went shopping in the town and played billiards at the club, and then back to camp (about three miles) for tea.

You would like my General. He is a fine-looking man—very tall—say six feet—very keen soldier—splendid General—altogether one of the best. I am very fond of him.

KROONSTADT.

August 30th, 1901.

Here we are at Kroonstadt again—after marching much by Lindley, etc. We had very little fighting except the second last day in, when we had a scrap with the Boers. We had one officer (a youngster, 21) and three men killed, and thirteen wounded. I can only write a short note as we have just got orders from Lord K. that we are to start again to-morrow, and there's lots to do. The General's shouting for me every other minute. I am off in ten minutes with the General to dine with the Dorset regiment, so must close up as have not washed.

A.D.C. to General Spens

KROONSTADT.

September 13th, 1901.

Back again at Kroonstadt. We make this our headquarters just now, and trek out for ten days or fortnight and then return for couple of days to refit and then out again. We were lucky this time capturing two Boer convoys. The Boers have absolutely given up anything like fighting now—only doing so when they see a chance of keeping us off their convoys and laagers.

The country is now almost entirely laid waste. You can go for miles and miles—in fact you might march for weeks and weeks and see no sign of a living thing or a cultivated patch of land—nothing but burnt farms and desolation. The fighting Boers are being gradually killed off or taken prisoners. You have, no doubt, seen the letter from the Transvaal to the Free State captured in President Steyn's tent, saying that " shortly the officials and officers of the Transvaal will be left in the field without burghers, and the war brought to a discredited end, nor have we enough ammunition left for another big fight." To this Steyn and De Wet replied with their usual " Trust in God." It is incomprehensible.

I have just received your letter giving me the sad news of X——'s death. I think that we should feel glad, however, that he died among gentlefolk and that his thoughts apparently flew back to the sunnier days of his home-days, and that in dying he thought of this and the shadow in between was

blotted out. Thus the Great Power begins the forgiveness—a sure sign of its continuation.

I am only writing to you this mail. Could you send me some "Haggises"? The General is keen on them, and, for Christmas, bun—shortbread—and plum-puddings. They keep all right. Last Christmas our fellows got lots.

I am in my usual splendid health.

TELEGRAM

Flourishing. Miller

NEAR VRYHEID,
TRANSVAAL.
October 15*th*.

Only time for a line—as we have just got into camp after hard trekking without wagons or blankets. We have been working up from Dundee, Natal, where we went in a great hurry. We have been chasing Botha and his Merry Men out of Natal, and they are now flying north and east, leaving their wounded in farms. I shall send you a long letter which I shall write to-day and post as opportunity offers. I simply have not had a minute for the last month, and the mail cart is just starting for Vryheid. Am very well. I telegraphed to you so that you might not be anxious.

A.D.C. to General Spens

NEAR VRYHEID,
TRANSVAAL.
October 17th, 1901.

We have just been in a very interesting trek, and will probably start on another presently. We got in here last night. We were hurried away from the Free State down to Dundee in Natal, owing to Botha with 2000 of the Brethren having advanced into the borders of Natal. He did some damage before we could get at him.

The trek from Dundee has been full of interest. We came by historic places. I saw Majuba Hill, and Laing's Nek, and marched thro' Rorke's Drift and Isandlwana. I saw all the old fortifications at Rorke's Drift, and the graves at Isandlwana. We have just had some hard work and trying days, as difficulty in supplies is great. All this part is wonderfully beautiful—Hope Mountain, forests and rivers. Zululand is specially fine. (I have been trying to write this letter all day as I may not have another chance for weeks and cannot get a minute's peace as the General is busy and I am writing telegrams and marking maps.) I have been gazetted as A.D.C. some months ago out here, and it will appear in " London Gazette " in due course. We have had very little fighting, but trying marches and wet weather.

I do hope you are all very well. I am afraid I have been very slack in writing home lately, but cannot help it, as in these bustling times I have

always to be at the General's elbow. He's shouting now.

NEAR VRYHEID,
TRANSVAAL.
October 17th, 1901.

I am in exceedingly good health.

We had one terrific march—about fifty miles almost without stopping night or day—to relieve a Major Chapman who was being attacked at Itala (borders of Zululand) by L. Botha, Esq., and 1500 Brethren—being almost the entire Transvaal army now left in the field. Chapman beat them off before we came up, killing about twenty, and wounding a lot more. We found the wounded afterwards in farms and many died as they had few comforts. Chapman lost about eighty killed and wounded.

The war is about a wash-out. The whole country is as flat as your hand and how it's going to recover beats me. I do not think we need nearly as many men out as we have, but people get so funky at home. I have no doubt they called this a Second Invasion of Natal, while it merely was the entire Transvaal fighting force collected together to attack a small isolated post on borders of Zululand. Some M.I. had a bit of a mess, but this was really nothing, although some nice fellows I knew were killed.

Our column is composed of 5th Corps M.I. (1100),

Gough's M.I. (about 500), half battalion Cameron Highlanders, six guns, one pom-pom.

We are resting for a day or two, for which I am thankful. I hope you are all having great times. The exhibition seems a source of great amusement.

NEWCASTLE,
NATAL.
October 30th, 1901.

Here I am having an excellent time as usual. We marched in here day before yesterday, and are having a few days' rest before starting again on trek. I am living with the General at the best hotel in the place, where they do us very well. From all accounts at present we are catching these Boers all over the place—and as there can't be more than say 7000 now in the field the war must end presently, even if we have to catch or kill them all. I am in most extraordinary good health.

This is a pretty town with lots of shops. I have been spending lots of money to-day buying things.

Colonel MacBean has gone to India, quite done up—and Colonel Burney is also sick, so I suppose MacNeal is commanding the battalion. I expect our next trek will be about Harrismith or Vride way in the Free State. This war is about bust up, take my word for it. There is jolly little fighting now. I shall like to be home again.

I played golf with the General yesterday and beat him. The links are awful, and don't give me

a fair chance at all. I shall not write any one else this mail, as it means just repeating what I have said.

I have a puppy (retriever) called " Buffles." You would like him.

STANDERTON,
TRANSVAAL, S.A.
November 24th.

I have just received all your letters and parcels Many thanks for them.

I suppose this letter will find you somewhere about Christmas-time—a very Happy Christmas to you all. I wish I was at home to spend it with you —but no doubt I shall be with you next year.

A lot of changes are taking place here. The 92nd are going to India in about five weeks' time—also the Devons. The Boers left in the field seem a desperate lot, but we are gradually killing them off by twos and threes. Every time we go out we kill three or four—and the other columns do the same —so in time there will be no more.

No doubt the people at home are sick at Benson's show, and saying that things are badly run—but it is not so. Botha and his men have the power of collecting their whole army together in a very short time—with them it is merely a question of riding fifty, sixty or one hundred miles to the rendezvous, and they will ride seventy-two miles in twenty-four hours. This they did in Benson's

case—with the result that the entire Transvaal fighting force (except the N.W.) attacked Benson's rear-guard, consisting of four companies M.I. and two companies of the East Kent regiment. This sort of thing we must take our chance of. Lots of small mobile columns are absolutely necessary to finish the war—and these must always be liable to such a rush as took place against Benson. Of course the Boers cannot remain together in such numbers, as they cannot feed themselves all together —but they can do it once in a way, and any small column they attack is bound to have a bad time.

We are resting here for the present for a few days, having done very hard work in the last three weeks, but we shall be off again presently. The reason the Burghers are given now by their leaders for our continuing the war is that if they keep on a little longer we shall have no more money to continue the war. They say the country is nearly bankrupt. We have come across a tremendous lot of their wounded lately in farms—poor wretches! many are dying for want of attendance. They are not attended to, putrefaction sets in, and of course they die.

STANDERTON.

November 25th, 1901.

I am, as usual, in the very best of health. It is now getting near Christmas Day. I did not think that I should spend another Christmas out

here—but I expect we shall be well into next summer (winter here) before this show is over.

This is the best time for the Boers, as they have plenty grass for their horses, but about June they will begin to feel the pinch. They have evidently given up all hope of replenishing their supply of Mauser ammunition, as lately, when they have captured any small post, they have broken their Mausers and taken our Lee-Mitfords. It is an extraordinary thing when we think of it that the Boers depend almost entirely for their ammunition on captures they make from us. One big fight would of course finish the war—but they know that just as well as we do. In the last three weeks we had a small scrap every day, and I only heard one Mauser shot fired, all the rest being Lee-Mitford. This shows perhaps more than anything else that this war is really done—that is the word. The country is "done"—the Boer ammunition is "done"—their medicines are "done"—their doctors are "done"—but we are *not* "done."

I have been reading in the "Scotsman" you sent me some speeches of members of Parliament, commenting on the incapacity shown out here by those in authority. I cannot conceive anything more untrue and unpatriotic than their remarks. I would rather stay here ten years than give in one jot or tittle to the Boers. Absolutely unconditional surrender is the only thing. At the outside it cannot be more than a year till they are *all* killed or

taken—and once they are reduced to say 3000 we need not really recognise them any more.

The Government should declare the war over and shoot any one found with arms—this is the way to treat them. They do not shoot our prisoners—but for excellent reasons—viz.—this is the only way they can get ammunition and clothes. The Boers, of course, get the clothes and over 100 rounds of ammunition off each man—besides saddles and horses. If the Boers shot our fellows, or kept them prisoners, they would fight to a finish every time, and Master Boer might kill them, but he would probably also be killed himself, and before he could strip them reinforcements would be galloping up—so you can very well see his reason for letting our men go scot-free.

It is beginning to get very hot here now—some days are really terrible—our tents being very little shade.

Much love for the Merriest Christmas.

STANDERTON,
TRANSVAAL.
November 26th, 1901.

The Christmas box has arrived, but will not be opened till Christmas time.

You seem to be living a quiet and worthy life. This rotten show ought to finish up in a few months' time—the beginning of winter, say June, ought to make a big difference. I've been over a goodish

bit of this country now, and I never want to see it again as long as I live. I was up in Pretoria for a couple of days with the General and dined with Lord Kitchener. We had a most excellent dinner. There was a very small party—my General and myself, Lord K. and his C.S.O. and two A.D.C.'s and General Tucker, and a man called Sir Howard Vincent, M.P.

I saw my regiment in Pretoria. Dingwall is leaving for home to be a volunteer adjutant near Aboyne in Aberdeenshire. Tytler is also going home to be adjutant to the London Scottish. I wish you could have seen Dingwall, but his home is in England, and he will spend his leave there when he gets home, but you might see him when he goes north. I will write him after he gets home, telling him our address, and you might put him up if he passes through. He's an excellent chap.

Wait till I come home, then you'll see. MY!

MAGENSEN,
30 MILES N.E. OF STANDERTON.
December 18th.

Still at it. We have just come in here from Ermelo, having had quite a successful trip. In conjunction with Bruce-Hamilton we made a night march and surprised two Boer laagers, and took nearly 100 prisoners, besides all their stock and food stuffs and clothes. Their opposition is becoming slighter and weaker every day. (I have changed my

pen !) This show may go on for a good time yet all the same, but as time passes there will not be the same necessity for keeping so many troops out here. This block house system is an excellent one and must result sooner or later in the capture of every Boer in the field. The country is simply being divided into a series of paddocks, so that, when completed, the Boers in any paddock will have to stay there—and then we can hunt them about in that paddock. They go about in small lots, keeping out their black boys as scouts to warn them of the approach of our columns. Then they trek for a few days, and sit down again for a few days.

(Began this letter some days ago, and am now finishing.)

I have just got your letters of November 8th. I should like to hear Aunt M. on the war—it must be very amusing. She will, I expect, tell me all about it when I come home.

Our great amusement here on off days is to play a game called " Bridge." How is old H—— N——? He ought to be getting married soon. They should all hurry up and choose their girls before I come home in a feather bonnet and a kilt—because they'll have small chance afterwards. You seem to have enjoyed the ambulance show. As a matter of fact I don't expect it was much like the real thing—unless in very exceptional circumstances. I believe " Let your wounded lie " until the show is over is the best thing—as if you start picking them up and

messing them about during action the poor beggars get hit again. I have seen wounded fired at, but very seldom—in that case, of course, they must be got out at once. But it's Private T. Atkins that does that—not the hospital people—although I have seen some plucky acts by doctor folk

AMERSFORT,
TRANSVAAL.
December 26th, 1901.

This is just a chance of getting a letter through. We had rather a scrap the other day. Two hundred of our M.I. got rushed by some 500 Boers—dressed in our uniform with helmets. They unfortunately mistook the Boers for our own men, and let them right in amongst them. Our men were lying down resting after a night march, and the surprise was complete. We only know of five dead Boers, whereas we lost two officers and eleven men killed, and many wounded.

We have had a rest to-day, and have had sports and concert for Christmas—very good it all was. I went in for—the only events open to officers—a bare-backed mule race and a potato race on bare-backed ponies. I did not win anything. Ha! Ha!

This war is really burst up. We spend all our time chasing handfuls of Boers in an endless country. Every now and then they get about 500 together, and go for some small party, but they split up again

immediately, as they cannot live in large bodies for fear of capture.

Hope this gets through.

BEGINDERLIJU BRIDGE,
NEAR ERMELO,
TRANSVAAL.
January 2nd, 1902.

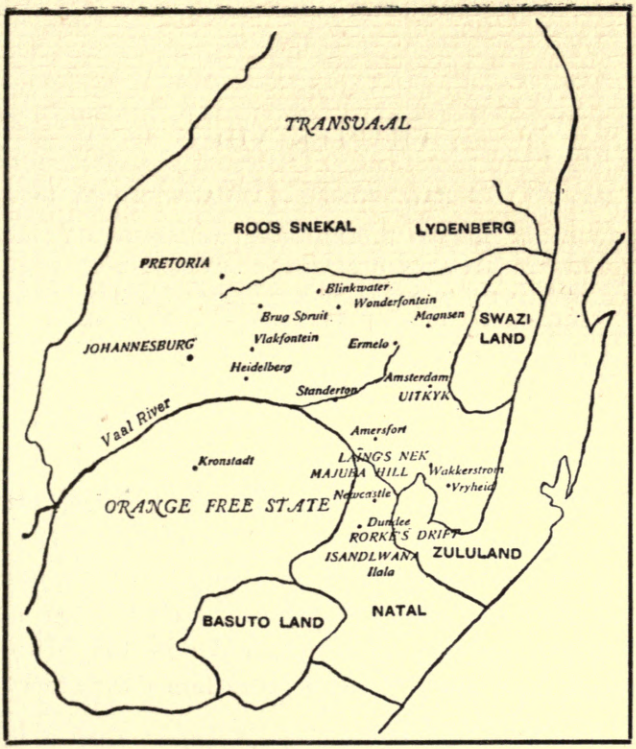
I have been unable to write for some time as we have been rushing about after Boers, picking up small lots here and there. We had a good chase the other day in conjunction with Plumer. We got the Boers in a corner and rode them down. We had to gallop for twelve miles straight on end as hard as we could go—but we got them in the end. Many of them were of the same lot who attacked Bridgeford's Column.

You ask me for details of my daily existence. Well—we march generally about 5 a.m. Rise at 3.30. Breakfast 4 a.m. Then we halt about 7-8 miles on, to let the men outspan and water, then on five to six miles to camp, getting in about 12—1 p.m., or, perhaps, if the road has been bad, about 3—4 p.m. Sometimes we have a little fight, sometimes we don't. Then very often we go out at night with, perhaps, 400 M.I., and two guns, to round up sleeping Boers. Sometimes we go off with no baggage for three or four days, leaving transport to follow. On these occasions we go forty to fifty miles in twenty-four hours.

I have three ponies—one a fine American pony, dark chestnut called Jezebel, another a little veldt pony called Elizabeth, and another a mare with no name which has just been stolen. I am rather angry at this, as she was very good under fire—quite steady. Then there is Buffles, the puppy—he sleeps foot of my small bed every night, and rides in a waggon on the trek. He is getting quite big now.

On the trek when we outspan to rest we have lunch from our Cape-cart, and tea when we come in, and then dinner at 7 o'clock. Our staff is now—Major Thomson, R.A., as Brigade-Major, myself A.D.C., Whitehead, a Natal Volunteer, as signalling officer, and Dorrien-Smith as sort of extra galloper. He runs the mess, and looks after our personal baggage wagons.

I do all the General's correspondence, and go with him everywhere.



LATER OPERATIONS UNDER GENERAL SPENS.

North of Transvaal (Lydenberg, Roos Snekal, etc.).

Orange Free State (Heilbron, Kroonstadt, etc.), starting from Heidelberg.

Natal—to relief of force at Itala on Zululand border.

South-east of Transvaal—New Scotland district again; borders of Swaziland and Zululand.

CHAPTER VIII

A.D.C. TO GENERAL SPENS: JANUARY—JUNE, 1902

Bejinderliju Bridge—Ermelo—near Amsterdam, Transvaal—Uitkyk, Swaziland border—Wakkerstrom—Vryheid—Vaalbank—Brugspruit—Block-House System of Driving the Enemy—Vlakfontein—Johannesburg.

BEJINDERAGE BRIDGE.

January 2nd, 1902.

A HAPPY New Year to you all.

I enclose a photo which was taken near Kroonstadt Free State by Major L——, of the Dorsets. It is very like the General. T—— is on his right, and you will notice me on the left. The Dorsets left us long ago and the Camerons, and now the Black Watch have gone. I had a great dinner with them on St. Andrew's night.

We have no infantry now—only 13th and 14th Battalion M.I. and Gough's (24) M.I., 4 R.H.A. guns and one pom-pom.

January 14th.

I have now got all kinds of things from you all. I cannot tell how I liked getting these Christmas gifts. The card-case and purse are splendid and mother's Testament awfully pretty. I shall not forget to dip into it.

We are just in from a night march, and have just three-quarters of an hour to catch the mail convoy, so have very little time to write, but this will let you know that I am very well and full of buck. I shall write long letters to all to-morrow for next mail. That is, if they leave us in peace.

January 28th.

Your letters of December 27th just arrived. We are having fairly hard times just now—night marches every day or two. We go along distances—sometimes forty miles between darkness and dawn. A night march is a curious thing. First, you get the orders—to rendezvous at some place a short distance out of camp. Then off you go, streaking away into the darkness across drifts, through bogs, up hills and down dales—ham after ham, and ham after ham. Then, just as the grey dawn is breaking, you get the order to trot, and you form a broader front. I probably take back the order,—say, Gough's M.I. on the right—13th M.I. centre—14th M.I. left—and you see the dim forms of the mounted men trotting up to their alignment. Then the day gets lighter, and you see the valley or farm you were told the Boers were in, larger. Then you trot faster. Then you see dim figures moving in front, catching horses —running about. Then you hear a shot. These are Boers. Gallop! and the thing is done.

They are very funny sometimes. You see a little lot rushing about trying to get out, they gallop

round in circles, and then stop and throw up their hands.

ERMELO,
TRANSVAAL, S.A.
February 3rd, 1902.

Since writing my mother the other day we have been resting our horses, and having a general easy time . . . You ask who are my companions on the staff? They are as follows:—Major Thompson as Brigade Major; Lieutenant Taylor, R. Berkshire Regiment is Provost Marshal; Captain Whitehead, Natal Volunteers, Signalling Officer; and Lieutenant Dorrien-Smith, 5th K.L.I. and Lord Alec Thynne gallopers—myself A.D.C. A lot of officers of the Indian Staff Corps have been sent out to be attached to the various mobile columns for instructional purposes. We have six in our column, and a Colonel Grover, 18th Bengal Lancers, is attached to the staff and lives with us. He is a very good fellow indeed.

I had a very kind letter from Willie Gordon, the Adjutant of my regiment, in which he said that after my term of staff service was over they would get me back into the 75th, even if it took a lot of working. Very nice of him to write like this.

I am sending you the letter Gordon wrote me after the action at Twyfelaar Drift, more than a year ago, as I have nearly lost it several times. The other day (about six weeks ago) the Provost Marshal and Dr. Cornwall recommended me very, very strongly for

"most distinguished gallantry." T—— got into a mess and his police ran away and left him and I went out and fixed him up and brought in a wounded man. I only tell you, as I know you will be glad to know that I do my best. I have done my best, nor have I ever—and I sometimes wonder at it—been in any fear of my life. I have been curiously preserved.

ERMELO,
TRANSVAAL, S.A.
February 3rd, 1902.

Here I am shoving along much as usual, and in my usual excellent health. The cake, etc., arrived all right. It is an exceptionally nice cake. Buffles is well, but suffering from the heat, which is sometimes very great, but nearly always, on this high veldt, tempered by a cool breeze.

We have got a gramophone, a very good one, and it plays selections after dinner. They are a most wonderful invention, and it is extraordinary the amusement we get out of ours.

At this time of the year one has to be very careful with the horses, as they get horse-sickness, and sometimes die in a few hours. Last year we lost a great many at this time and a little later.

I hope my mother is taking care of herself, and will not suffer from any more colds. I will boss her about when I come back again.

I had a letter the other day from Sandy Taylor, who seems—as far as I can gather—to be going extremely strong. Do you ever see anything of him?

NEAR AMSTERDAM,
TRANSVAAL, S.A.
Posted *February 17th*, 1902.

We are out just now what we call "light"—*i.e.*, we live in bivouacs instead of tents.

We are still busy chasing and catching Boers—and should soon have chased out all this part entirely. They are coming in very freely to surrender just now, and they say they are frightfully pushed for food—but of course nothing to what they will be in the winter months. The bitter cold will soon be with us.

I should think that very soon troops will begin to be withdrawn from this country—as I cannot conceive that they will continue to keep this enormous force out here with so few Boers left in the field. I am keeping in my usual health. We are near the Scotch country now, and farms have names like "Roburnia," "Glasgow," "Kelvinside," "Athole," and the like. Quite homely. Love.

UITKYK,
SWAZILAND BORDER.
February 28th, 1902.

I am rather tired—just off a long trek, and couple of night marches—and the only chance of mail is

4 a.m. to-morrow morning by convoy to Carolina. I am as usual very well but very sleepy. The horse-sickness season is now upon us, and we shall have to be careful, or we shall lose our beasts.

My General has at present three columns—M'Kenzie's, Allenby's, and his own, and we have been picking up a fair amount of stuff. In my opinion there are very few burghers left in the field. We never fight now—just chase, chase, chase. We have been co-operating with Plumer, who is a most excellent man. Quite one of the best in the field. Little chap, with an eyeglass—very nice, kindly little fellow.

These Boers are funny fellows. We caught one the other day who immediately offered to be a guide, and took part the day after in a night march, and brought in one of his pals, as pleased as Punch—and this is a common thing. Immediately they are caught they are all anxious (I have seen very few exceptions) to serve against their own people, and are as happy as possible.

I am so sleepy I must go to bed.

WAKKERSTROM,
TRANSVAAL.
March 2nd, 1902.

Just a short note against time. We are marching down Natal way again after Botha. Nasty knock for De Wet that last show. I rather think this will go some way to hastening the end. Just ordered off to get convoy on road.

In splendid health.

A Captain of the Gordons

VRYHEID, S.A.
March 8th.

Here we are at Vryheid. We have had one day's rest, and are just off again. We are all still acting under Bruce-Hamilton. Following are the columns.

General Spens ..	13th M.I. 14th M.I. 24th M.I.
Colonel MacKenzie	Sc. Horse. 3rd M.I. 26th M.I.
Colonel Allenby	Carabineers. 13th Hussars.
Colonel Wing ..	18th Hussars. 19th Hussars.
Colonel Stewart Colonel Colville	J.M.R. Yeomanry Hussars.

Last night we had a small dance here given by the 14th M.I. The General and I went down and had some great fun. The sister-in-law of Louis Botha was there, dancing away with the best. We are going after Louis this time, and hope to give him a knock—but this is a very difficult mountainous country, and hard for transport.

If things go on as they are I should think they will be able to send some regiments home for the Coronation. This will be a great spectacle, I should think.

We have had a lot of rain here lately, but this should soon be over now, as there is generally very

little rain after beginning of April. Then comes on the clear cold weather. August is the worst month. Fearful winds, icy cold, and dust.

VAALBANK,
NEAR VRYHEID.
March 17th, 1902.

We have been going about as usual in conjunction with Colonel Mackenzie, Colonel Allenby, Colonel Stewart,—all under Bruce-Hamilton. This is the same country as, you may remember, we were in some months ago—very mountainous and difficult. In conjunction with other columns we tried to march up Louis Botha and 500 Boers the other night, and were very nearly successful. We caught Emmett, who is now next in command to Botha, and twenty others, killing four. Botha was actually riding with Emmett when he was caught, but slipped away in the dark and escaped among the rocks and kloofs.

Imagine a country like neighbourhood of Lochgoil, only much bigger hills, and deep, deep valleys —the country itself of vast size. You may believe how difficult it is to catch these people, who hide away in all this network of hills like birds in a forest of trees.

Buffles is growing a fine dog. I hope I shall be able to get him home, but doubt it.

NEAR VRYHEID.
March 23rd, 1902.

Not very much time for writing this time. The Brigade Major has been ill, and I am doing both Brigade Major and A.D.C., so am busier than usual. We are off to-morrow morning at 2 a.m. on three days' "jolly" as we call it. We go without anything but a blanket and a change of clothing. This is a very difficult country for horses—in fact, in parts almost impossible. We have been on the very tail of Botha several times, but he has tremendous luck.

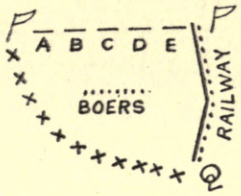
I am quite a responsible person at present. I issue orders, choose camp and water, plan the picket line of three regiments of M.I., a battery, hospital, etc. My horses are all very well, and I have been lucky this year in not losing any—as I did last year.

The rains are still on, but will soon be over—and we shall all be very glad. You can always provide against cold, but not against wet.

BRUGSPRUIT,
TRANSVAAL.
April 25th, 1902.

We have been having a very bad time for the last two months, never having a halt for sixty days. We are "driving" now, and it is curious work, and shows what an extraordinary stage the war is now in—if, indeed, you can call it a war at all. We

"drive" as follows. Two points are selected by the chief—one probably on a block house, and another on the railway, thus——



A, B, C, D, E are columns, and they drive down to the point Q, and the Boers cannot get out. The columns at starting point probably cover a front of about sixty miles which gradually lessens.

At night we form a chain of outposts at about 150 yards' interval, and a hasty wire entanglement is put up in front of each regiment. We march about twenty-five miles a day. Sometimes the Boers try to get out, generally by rushing the picquet line at night, but they frequently make no effort, running along in front like sheep until caught in the cover.

There is great talk of peace now, and I think it will come off.

VLAKFONTEIN,
NEAR HEIDELBERG.
May 2nd, 1902.

We came in from another drive the other day, and I went off with the General to Pretoria to see the

Chief. We stayed there a few hours, and then went to Johannesburg, where we stayed one day, and have just arrived back here. We go off again on another drive to-morrow morning.

Great rumours of Peace. In Johannesburg and Pretoria you would never think any war was going on at all. Theatres going and everything.

CENTRAL HOTEL,
JOHANNESBURG,
May 21*st*, 1902.

Here I am having a holiday with the General. We are having a great time, and spending lots of money, just like schoolboys. We are playing golf in the afternoons. To-day we play a foursome with Sir Godfrey Logan and a Mr. Parker—both good players. We have been to the theatre and had some great feasts. This holiday is because the columns have been halted for the present, owing to Peace negotiations. I think it is Peace—however, one never knows. In case of Peace I may come home with the General, or may go back to my regiment and come home with them.

I am as usual very fit—and playing quite a decent game of golf.

NEW CLUB,
JOHANNESBURG,
TRANSVAAL.

As you may perceive from above address I am on the loose in Johannesburg with the General. Peace

Photo by] [Duffus Bros.

DAVID, ON PEACE DAY, SOUTH AFRICA,
May 31st, 1902.

[*Face page* 132.

at last. The General has sent in his staff recommendations, and he offered me my company in another regiment or a D.S.O. He is trying to get home now, and he is going to bring me with him if he can.

I shall wire when I am leaving simply name of steamer.

I am going to Pretoria to-morrow, and shall see my regiment.

We went to church yesterday—quite a novelty—as I haven't been in a proper church since I came out. The parson gave out the Peace before the sermon. Great excitement. Love.

TELEGRAM

Handed in at CAPE TOWN, 4.55 p.m.

Received at GLASGOW, 10.38 p.m.

Flourishing. Miller.

Last of the South African Letters.

BUFFLES: AN INTERLUDE

CHAPTER IX

BUFFLES: AN INTERLUDE

BUFFLES was not left behind in South Africa. When General Spens and David stepped across the gangway to the ship that was to take them home the long-limbed black puppy trotted behind them. He did not know that the ship would bear him for ever from his native veldt with its kopjes and brushwood to a land of walled gardens, but little would he have cared had he known. He was with David, and that was enough for Buffles.

He was a Boer watch-dog puppy of fine breed: a Labrador retriever with soft, silky hair, strongly built, with a powerful chest that seemed to tell of a strain of the mastiff. He had first seen the light in a South African farm called "Buffleskloof." It was the usual type of South African farm, with its dwelling-house and outhouses built on a clearing on the bleak veldt, with nothing to break the monotony but dots of kopjes and smudges of brushwood—monotonous in their turn. The morning after Buffles was born the farm sighted the British advancing in the distance. Panic seized the farmer's household. They fled. They took Buffles' mother with them, but they did not take the tiny black ball

with the white spot on his breast that was Buffles himself.

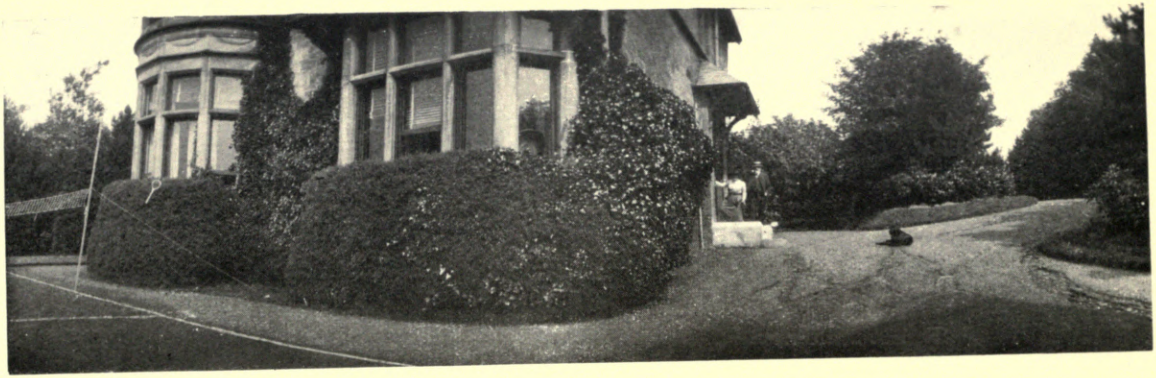
The British advanced on one side as the farm-folk fled on the other. And the farm lay still on the space it claimed from the veldt, and Buffles lay still on the space he claimed from the farm.

General Spens halted his brigade. A glance showed the state of matters. The farm was deserted. There was only one thing to do: for there was an object to gain so great as to drown all lesser evils. The object was to end the war: and the thing to do was to burn the farm.

The usual search began for any living thing, and a soldier found Buffles asleep on his straw. He raised the little black ball in his hand and brought it to the A.D.C. David slipped it into his pocket. "I hardly thought it would live," he said, as he told the story long afterwards. "I kept it in my pocket as we rode away, and I would put my hand in to feel if it were still living, and it was always quite warm."

Buffles not only lived but throve. David fed him with milk out of the finger of a glove, and every night the little black ball slept at David's feet in his jaeger bag. He used to creep up at intervals during the night for air, and then creep down again. And thus was love fanned into life in the little dumb thing's heart—love for David.

The first separation came at Southampton. Quarantine tore Buffles from his master's side and imprisoned him, a much-bewildered dog, at Croydon;



BUFFLES ON GUARD IN HIS NEW HOME.

[*Face page* 139.

and sent his master with a wrathful heart-ache home without him to Scotland.

David's home-coming was simple. One day his voice was heard to shout in the hall :

" Anybody about ? "

He was home.

Buffles was not forgotten. Several times David went to Croydon to see him, until at last he was allowed to bring him home to Milton of Campsie : for the old home in Royal Crescent where David was born had been sold. By that time the puppy had grown into a remarkably beautiful dog. His wavy black hair was soft as silk, his head of noble outline, the power in his chest intensified, and the lithe body and limbs in fine proportion. At first he would not let David out of his sight, and brooded with a melancholy nose between his paws if David went from home. But at last, after much coaxing, he consented to adopt David's family as his own, and from that moment he ruled the household.

Then came trouble. Given a big gambolling dog just out of puppydom in a quiet country neighbourhood that teems with other dogs, and it is a matter of course and of time that there shall be trouble. Therefore when David was ordered to join the 2nd battalion of his regiment in India the question of keeping Buffles at home was silently shelved.

But in a few months Buffles was home again. How this came about is told in the following letters —the letters from Somaliland.

SOMALILAND LETTERS

December, 1902—*June*, 1904

CHAPTER X

SOMALILAND LETTERS: DECEMBER, 1902—JUNE, 1904

Introduction

DAVID was appointed to serve with the 2nd battalion of his regiment in India, and towards the end of December he sailed from Liverpool in the S.S. "Nubia," according to official instructions. Buffles went with him.

At Port Said a naval officer came on board the ship, and asked for "Mr. Miller of the Gordons." David was in his cabin and the purser went to fetch him. He ran up.

"Are you Mr. Miller of the Gordons?"

"Yes."

"Then you are to come back with me to the captain of the warship."

"What is the reason of this?"

"I cannot say. My orders are to take you to him. He will tell you the reason."

"Very funny!" said David. He had to go, however.

They rowed off to the man-o'-war at the port, to the excited interest of the watching "Nubia."

David was at once ushered into the captain's cabin.

"Mr. Miller of the Gordons?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have a telegram from the War Office for you."

David slit it open and found that he was ordered to go as Special Service Officer to Somaliland.

It meant parting with Buffles. To Somaliland a dog could not go. So Buffles was given in charge of some young officers bound for India.

The "Nubia" gave David a great send-off before she steamed on her way. David waited in the man-o'-war until the P. & O. "Oriental" should pick him up to land him at Aden. The "Nubia" did not touch at Aden. The "Oriental" passed her in the Red Sea, and she signalled "Good-bye and Best Wishes." Thus the one ship with her ten days' familiar faces and Buffles went on her way to India, and the other bore David to active service in Somaliland.

VOYAGE OUT

Mediterranean Sea, December 28th, 1902—
Port Said, January 3rd, 1903

CHAPTER XI

VOYAGE OUT: DECEMBER, 1902—JANUARY, 1903

MEDITERRANEAN SEA,
S.S. "NUBIA."
December 28th, 1902.

A HAPPY New Year to you all.

Buffles is well and having a very good time playing with the twenty-one young officers. His coat did him splendidly, and he needed it very badly at first, as we had frightful weather. The weather has been more or less cold up to now, but is getting a bit warmer the last day or so.

Young Gordon Duff sent me a most beautiful knife before I left. I got it in the boat. The Governor enjoyed himself I think in Liverpool.

Give my very kind regards to all our friends.

Much love.

S.S. "NUBIA,"
PORT SAID.
December 28th, 1902.

Here I am, having, in spite of circumstances, a very good time. There are twenty-one young officers on board, all straight from Sandhurst, and going to join the Indian Staff Corps.

To-morrow we get into Port Said, and some of us shall go on shore and have some fun. We had most shocking weather for the first five days—what the captain called a S.W. gale. I was the only person not sick. It is a curious thing, I never seem to get ill at sea. The captain is a very nice man indeed—quite one of the best—and has done all he could to make me comfortable. I sit in the place of honour on his right.

Major Curtis, R.A.M.C., is also on board. An Irishman, like most of his profession, and a very decent chap.

S.S. "NUBIA,"
PORT SAID
December 29th.

Ordered by War Office to leave "Nubia" here and proceed to Aden per P. & O. for active service in Somaliland.

Full particulars to-morrow.

P. & O. STEAMER "ORIENTAL."

Here I am off again on active service. I had to part with Buffles, which was a break, but it was impossible to take him on, and equally impossible to send him home, as the Board of Agriculture would not have allowed him in the country again. This show will last about a year I should think, when I shall get some leave and come home. My address

is now " Somaliland Field Force." Ask the Governor to tell the regiment, and I shall write them from Aden.

This is a beautiful ship. I was sorry to leave the " Nubia." They gave me a great send-off at Port Said. I shall write from Aden, as there is some doubt about this getting posted at Suez.

S.S. " ORIENTAL."

January 3rd, 1903.

Off again to the front. I received orders from the senior naval officer at Port Said to disembark from the " Nubia " and embark for Aden on this boat. A copy of the War Office telegram was also handed to me—

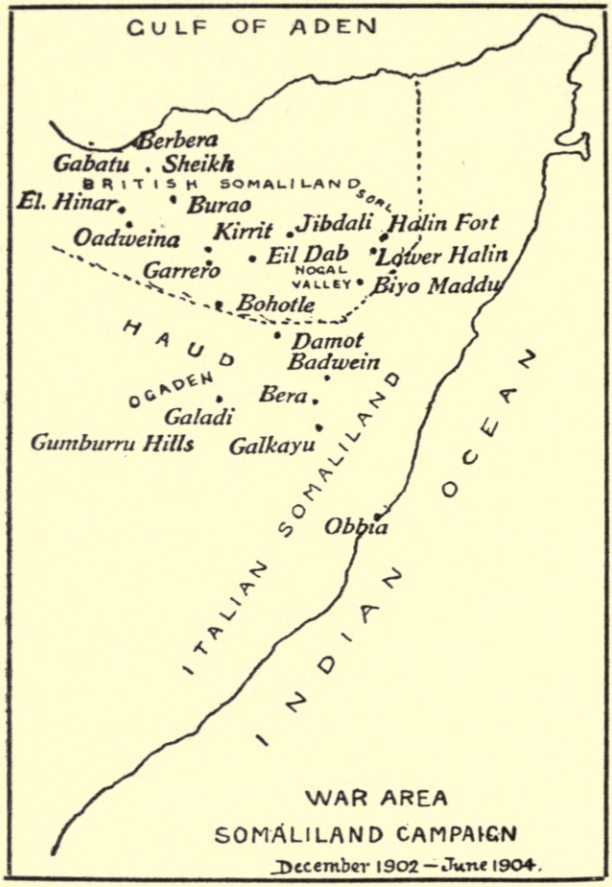
" Order Lieutenant Miller, 2nd battalion Gordon Highlanders, to disembark at Port Said, and provide him with a passage, to join the ' Somaliland Field Force.' "

What job I am going to get I do not know, but I am on special service.

I had some fun at Port Said. The captain of the man-o'-war asked me to a dance and to lunch the next day, and I had a great time. I shall have a beastly job buying an active service kit at Aden, but will just need to do my best. I am also very anxious about my uniform and good clothes, which will get spoiled.

BERBERA—BOHOTLE

January 6th, 1903—*March 13th*, 1903


GULF OF ADEN
Berbera
Gabatu
Sheikh
BRITISH SOMALILAND
El. Hinar
Burao
Jibdali
Halin Fort
Oadweina
Kirrit
Eil Dab
Lower Halin
Garrero
NOGAL VALLEY
Biyo Maddu
Bohotle
HAUD
Damot
Badwein
OGADEN
Bera
Galadi
Gumburru Hills
Galkayu
ITALIAN SOMALILAND
Obbia
INDIAN OCEAN
WAR AREA
SOMALILAND CAMPAIGN
December 1902 – June 1904.

CHAPTER XII

BERBERA—BOHOTLE : JANUARY—MARCH, 1903

Berbera — Drilling Somali Mounted Infantry — Writes Mounted Infantry Drill—Ponies and Camel—Burao—Taking of Damot Wells—Bohotle.

BERBERA,
SOMALILAND.
January 6th, 1903.

Just arrived here. Attached, pending orders, to the Somaliland Mounted Infantry. Advancing shortly. Very well.

January 9th, 1903.

I am having a great time trying to make M.I. soldiers out of Somali levies. They are very rum chaps.

I am sending my uniform home to take care of, as it would spoil utterly here. I hope it arrives all right. We have to provide our transport and food here—quite different from South Africa. I bought a burden camel this morning, and am going to buy an Arab one for riding, also some ponies. The pay ought to be very good here, but at present we cannot get any, as the War Office have not yet

sent a paymaster out, so I am drawing against Holt.

My brother officers are Captain Dickinson, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and Lieutenant Chichester, Somerset L.I.

The climate is very pleasant, but they say there is some fever. A long letter next time.

We shall probably advance in about three weeks against the Mullah.

January 16th, 1903.

I am enjoying myself very much and am exceedingly well. We are busy drilling raw Somalis, and I have written a Mounted Infantry Drill for them, with which the C.O. is much pleased.

I have got two ponies—a grey one and a brown, and one camel.

This is, as far as I can make out, a very healthy country—especially in the interior. A simultaneous advance is to be made on the Mad Mullah—one from " Obbia " which is in Italian territory, and one from here. My brother officers are both exceedingly nice men, and I think good soldiers. The real C.O. is Major Sharpe, but he is at present down with fever, and is staying in the hospital ship.

The only thing you might send me is food—soup squares, cakes, biscuits, etc., as we have to feed ourselves up country in the Jungle, and have to buy stores here and take them up on our own camels at our own expense.

This is different from the Knoll. I am feeling parting with Buffles very much. I shall send home my spools of photos as I finish them. Please send me out fresh ones for No. 1 Panorama kodak.

There is an Italian count here, just come out, a cavalry officer. He dined with me at the Consul's last night, and we had great fun. I taught him to sing, " Good-bye, Dolly, I must leave you," and he was very funny.

January 29th, 1903.

We are busy here training our men. It is hard work, as I am the only one who knows anything about M.I. drill. It is interesting work. We shall go up country in about ten days, I think. We have morning parade at 7 o'clock till 8.30. Afternoon 3.30 to 5, stables 9-6.

I just stopped just now to write orders as I am doing the Adjutant's work.

The climate is pleasant but hot at night. I have got an Indian tent and am very comfortable. My brother officers are very nice indeed. Pope-Hennessey, a subaltern in the Oxford Light Infantry, has arrived in command of the Camel Corps, and he lives with us. Major Sharpe is back again now, but he lives by himself. The great man here is the Consul—General Manuel Cordeaux, a very good fellow indeed, and a very able man.

I am afraid the Obbia column will see most of the fighting.

Papers will be most welcome. I am trying to get a riding camel, but they are hard to get.

BERBERA,
ADEN.
February 5th, 1903.

Still going very strong. There is a lot of work to do training the extraordinary Somali. The regiment is really becoming quite respectable, and we got great praise from O.C.L. of C., who wrote very favourably about our progress. Major Sharpe, the C.O., also very kindly wrote to the General that the progress was mainly due to my efforts. I like the work, and that makes all the difference.

I do not think the advance can be delayed longer than another week or so. We shall then move to Bohotle, about 210 miles south, and wait orders. I do not imagine the fighting will be of a very dangerous character. The climate is perfect. Must close now—more next week.

BERBERA.
February 13th, 1903.

Fearfully busy. Marching to front to-morrow. Doing Adjutant's work, so no time to do anything. I have got a splendid servant, who was servant to Colonel Swayne.

Love.

Extraordinarily fit.

LIEUTENANT MILLER AND MAJOR GOUGH AT THE TAKING OF DAMOT WELLS.

[*Face page* 157.

Berbera—Bohotle

BURAO.

February 20th, 1903.

This may reach you, but it is not easy sending letters. They are carried by camel-men on fast-trotting camels. We are on our way to Bohotle, where we shall establish connection with the Obbia column. I am now permanently mounted infantry, although I was originally meant for transport. Awfully well. We are 150 strong and four officers. All Somalis. Long letter later.

BOHOTLE.

March 8th, 1903.

Here we are again. I am now permanently M.I. We had a small show the other day taking a place called Damot Wells. Maud, the "Graphic" correspondent, made a picture of it, and it will duly appear in the "Weekly Graphic." I am in the picture, and Major Gough, the Staff-Officer. I am very busy, as I am doing really Adjutant as . . . I am in the very best of health and spirits. This is a very fine climate, but a bit hot—110-112 in the shade—and goodness knows what in the sun. My servant and interpreter is doing well. His name is Abdullah Mohammed. His tribe Habr Tunis. We recruit from three tribes—Habr Awal, Habr Tunis, and Dolbahante. They are a curious, wandering people, never staying long in one place, but moving about with their camels. The camel

represents money, house, food, everything to the Somali.

I have to take down evidence now for court-martial on a deserter, and the mail goes in half-an-hour, so must stop.

BOHOTLE.

March 13th, 1903.

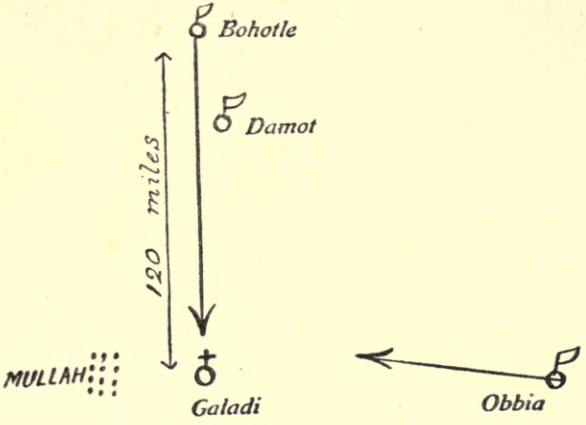
Two nights ago we marched to a place about forty miles from here called Lasakanta Wells, and arriving at dawn, surprised some wretched savages, some of whom we killed. You will see great reports in the papers about fighting out here, but there is no fighting. I am just as safe here as at home. The country is healthy, shooting plentiful, pay excellent, so all goes merrily.

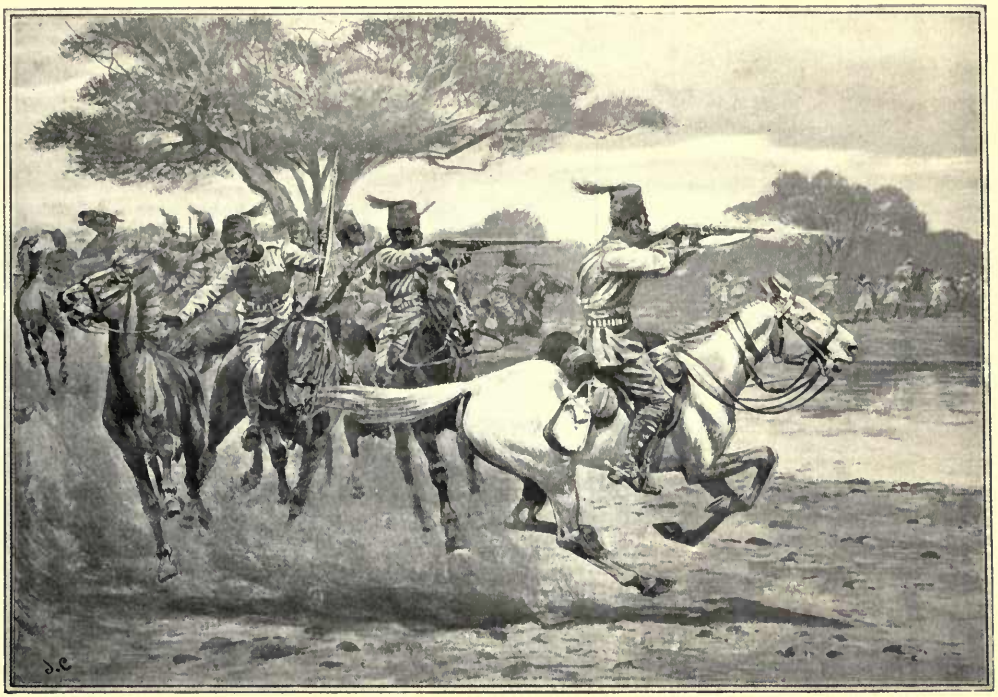
Enclosed is a plan showing the general idea, but it's all a very badly run show.

X is weak, Z should never be allowed to go near a soldier. Chichester is a good fellow, and backs me up.

I suppose at the end X will get a Brevet, and Z a D.S.O. Oh my!

The work interests me, and I am enjoying myself thoroughly. The absence of water is the chief difficulty here—but, although bad, enteric is unknown.


Bohotle
Damot
120 miles
MULLAH
Galadi
Obbia



THE SOMALI MOUNTED INFANTRY CAPTURING THE WELLS.

[*Face page* 160.

GALADI—BERA

March 30th, 1903—*June 3rd*, 1903

CHAPTER XIII

GALADI-BERA: MARCH—JUNE, 1903

Joined General Manning's Column at Galkayu Wells—Galadi—Fight with the Mullah's men described in extract from "Daily Telegraph"—Egato, near Galadi—Disaster—Bera—Commanding all the S.M.I. on the southern side—Games

GALADI,
SOMALILAND.
March 30th, 1903.

I HAVE now an opportunity of writing, as Maud, the "Graphic" correspondent, is going home, and he can take the letter.

Chichester and I were sent here with seventy men to join Manning's column. We suffered considerably from want of water on the way, and found the column at Galkayu Wells. We then came on here about seventy miles due west with the mounted troops under Major Kenna, whom I know well. We were supposed to fight here, but we have had no fighting, nor, as far as I can see, are we likely to have. No doubt the papers will report fully, but that is all rot.

This is the very worst run show you could possibly conceive. They want to shove along much faster

than they do. We might all be at home at present for all the good we are doing here.

We are a curious mixture, the mounted troops :—

One detachment, the 60th Rifles, M.I.

One detachment Boer M.I.

One detachment Punjab M.I. (Indians), and one detachment Somali M.I.

All sorts and conditions.

I am in extrordinary good health. Bad water does not seem to affect me in the least. Sometimes the sun is a bit strong if we march through the heat of the day.

It is a beastly country, thorn scrub, rocks, and sand and no running water.

I am supposed to be a transport officer, but am, as you may see, with the M.I. Transport is an awful job—looking after camels.

It is hard to write, as there is a beastly wind blowing.

Note.—There is no further letter until April 9th, in which David says :—" I had a little fight the other day, and had my horse wounded." The actual facts were first known through the medium of " The Daily Telegraph," from which the following is copied.

EXTRACT FROM " THE DAILY TELEGRAPH "
(*April 23rd*, 1903).

(*Through " Reuter's Agency "*)

GALADI, *April 15th* (*via* ADEN, *April 21st*).

" On the 2nd Colonel Cobbe started with two companies of the 1st King's African Rifles, and one

company of the 2nd battalion under Captain Llewellyn, and twenty men of the Somali Mounted Infantry under Lieutenant Miller, to operate to the south of Colonel Plunket towards Gerlogubi. After marching fifty miles, he got word of a party of spearmen with stock. The mounted troops under Lieutenant Miller at once pushed ahead, and, surrounding the bush where the enemy were reported to be, charged in, shooting from their horses at the enemy dodging in and out of the bush. Lieutenant Miller himself charged a part of the enemy, killing eight and having his horse speared under him."

EGATO, NEAR GALADI, SOMALILAND.
April 9th, 1903.

Parcels most acceptable, as food is very scarce and any luxury a great treat.

I had a little fight the other day, and had my horse wounded. Colonel Cobbe, under whom I was acting, told me he had sent in my name to the General. . . . I am in great health and spirits.

In my opinion this show is an awful bauchle.

I have just finished "Wee MacGregor," and enjoyed it immensely. I think it is one of the best of its kind I have read. Hits off the class to a "T." Could you send me some books—cheap paper books, as one generally reads through the heat of the day, and I have no books except "Wee MacGregor." A lot of letters, parcels and papers are bound to get

lost out here, as the postal arrangements are quite uncertain.

Buffles seems to be having lively times, and to be costing some money, but that is not his fault.

I am gazetted for transport, but acting with M.I. for the good of the service. How long this show may go on it is impossible to say, but I do not think for very much longer—unless the country is prepared to spend a lot more money.

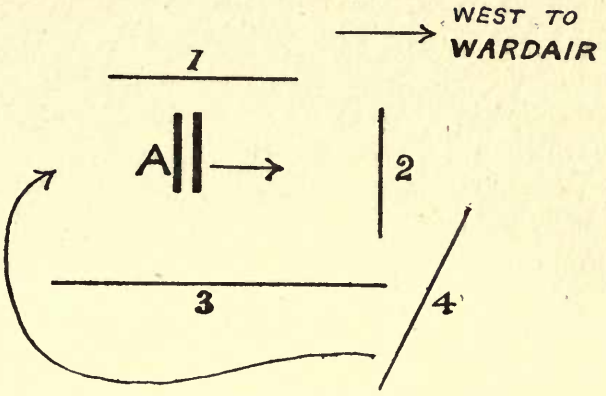
GALADI.

April 21st, 1903.

There has been a disaster here—just what might have been expected from the way the show is run. Poor Chichester was killed, but not in the bad show—in a skirmish. We galloped out with Major Kenna to relieve Colonel Cobbe, who was in great difficulties after the disaster. I shall write a long account to you later, but they only give us about ten minutes' warning about a mail, and at present my hands are full with wounded men and ponies.

You may take for granted this will not occur again,—but what Manning will do now beats me.

Disaster as under :—



1, 2, 3, 4.—MULLAH'S MEN.
A.—COLONEL PLUNKETT'S 200 MEN AND 9 OFFICERS. (40 men escaped. Officers all killed.)

Do not let this alarm you at all. I am very well, but sad about so many good fellows being killed. Between S.A. and this I am tired of killing and being killed. Long account at first opportunity. I telegraphed to-day,—

" Safe and flourishing,"

but I do not know if it will reach you.

BERA.

May 4th, 1903.

There has been another show on the other side. Gough's column. A good many casualties, I fear. They seem to have done well, especially the Bikaneer Camel Corps. I have not been in any of these unhappy shows, thereby losing both chance of glory and of being killed. I am in the very best of health and expect to be back at Bohotle shortly.

Major Kenna, commanding the mounted troops, has asked me to be his staff officer at least *pro tem.*, and I shall do what I can, at the same time running my own show. Some hard work ahead, I expect. I should like to be at the Knoll, well out of this beastly country. No place for a white man this.

There is a young woman out here shooting, I believe—Lady Constance M'Kenzie. She is at Sheikh.

This may turn out another interminable campaign like the S.A. war. I am sure I hope not. Please send me papers, as I have nothing to read.

How is Buffles ? It must be very pretty at home just now. It is possible, if the campaign continues, in the autumn one might get a few weeks' leave ; in which case, regardless of expense, I shall come home.

BERA.

May 28th, 1903.

I have not written for some time as there has been no opportunity. I am kept pretty busy as I am commanding all the Somali M.I. on this side (southern side), and as they are the only people who can do any scouting at all I am going most of the time.

It is useless going into the causes of the failure of this ill-fated expedition, or laying the blame at any particular door, but the speeches in Parliament are mostly very far from the point, and many of the statements made there very far from accurate.

The use of a man-stopping bullet, whether hollow or dum-dum, is, in my opinion, absolutely necessary in savage war,—more especially where, as in bush country, the fire area is exceedingly limited. Savages do not take long to rush over 150-200 yards of open ground, and in that space they must be stopped. If the modern thin bullet be used, large numbers, although hit slightly and severely, are bound to reach the point of fire, and are as dangerous in their wounded condition as if uninjured. On the other hand the man-stopping bullet on impact and expansion causes such a tremendous shock that it is probable no man, even if only wounded in a fleshy part, would for some minutes be capable of continuing his rush. As a matter of fact, the large proportion of Plunkett's force were supplied with hollow-nosed bullets.

As regards the strategy of the campaign, the advance from Obbia was, I think, a very questionable move, and much better results would have been obtained by a well-equipped series of operations from a line with Bohotle as its centre, extending east and west by the Nogal Valley. To enter into details would require a map, and much writing.

As regards the tactics of the campaign, the advance from Obbia was, from the beginning, carried out in what appears to the observing officer a tactically dangerous manner—due possibly to the great difficulties of transport and water supply. That the difficulties were great is certain—that

these difficulties could have been foreseen and overcome so that an efficient force could have ultimately met the Mullah in the field, is not for me to say, but must be left to the careful consideration of the officers who control the movement of troops in the field. Whatever the cause, the end of the campaign, if this is the end, sees us in a very difficult position, and if the troops on these lines of communication are withdrawn to Bohotle without further disaster or loss, it will be a matter of great congratulation.

If the Mullah is left in his present strength I do not see how Bohotle can be permanently held—not that a fairly strong garrison would not be able to withstand his attacks, but the running of the convoys with supplies to the garrison would naturally be attended with the greatest danger; and with the withdrawal of troops any expedition to the relief of Bohotle, if so beleaguered, would only be undertaken with insufficient force, with the probable result that the entire line from Bohotle to Sheikh would fall an easy prey to the enemy.

These, however, are melancholy forebodings, and things may brighten up.

Great love.

I have not received a mail for some weeks.

BERA.

June 3rd, 1903.

Here I am still at Bera, running convoys to Galadi; not a pleasant job. The old Mullah is keeping

quiet, praise be to God. Long may he remain so. The sooner I am out of this beastly hole the better I shall be pleased.

I have sent no photos home as have no means of packing them. I am exceedingly well and in good spirits. Papers and books have arrived, and are a great thing, as one has nothing to read here at all. I enclose programme of sports we had here to while away the time. I am taking lessons in Hindustani from a Eurasian hospital assistant, but don't make much progress.

PROGRAMME OF GAMES

BERA, SOMALILAND, *June 3rd*, 1903.

Under the Gracious Patronage of His Madness The Mullah Mohammed Abdullah, Herman Hag and Staff.

EVENTS.

3.30 p.m. 1.—Officers' Pony Jumping Competition.

Capt. Pressey (?) (2nd Sikhs)	" Unknown "	Owner.
Mr. White (K.R.R.C.)	" Kangaroo "	,,
Mr. Kelly ,, ..	" Drumscree "	,,
Mr. H. (R.A.M.C.) ..	" Vlockuski "	,,
Mr. Miller (Gordon Highlanders)	" Asker "	,,

2. 100 Yards Flat Race—for W.O.'s and Sergeants. 1st Prize, Box Navy Cut Tobacco.

4 p.m.—3. Kohans Flat Race, with Dhurkas, 1st Prize 4 Rs.

4. Obstacle Race (2nd Sikhs), 1st Prize 5 Rs.; 2nd Prize 3 Rs.

5. Lloyd-Lindsay Competition (K.R.R.C.), 1st Prize, 8 Rs.

Pony Race, bare-backed (S.M.I.), 1st Prize, 5 Rs.

Food and Cooking Race (2nd Sikhs), 1st Prize 4 Rs.; 2nd Prize, 2 Rs.

Boot Race (K.R.R.C.), 1st Prize, 5 Rs.; 2nd Prize, 3 Rs.

Flat Race (K.R.R.C.), 1st Prize, 5 Rs.; 2nd Prize, 3 Rs.

Flat Race (2nd Sikhs), 1st Prize, 5 Rs.; 2nd Prize, 3 Rs.

Flat Race (S.M.I.), 1st Prize, 4 Rs.; 2nd Prize, 2 Rs.

Mule Race (L.M.B.), 1st Prize.

To be contested Monday, June 2nd.

By kind permission of Captain Pressey (2nd Sikhs) the Band of the Sweepers will be in attendance (by kind permission of the Sweepers).

BURAO—BOHOTLE

July 7th, 1903—*December 24th*, 1903

CHAPTER XIV

BURAO-BOHOTLE : JULY 7—DECEMBER 24, 1903

Arrival at Burao after marching without a Halt since June 9—Gabatu—El Hinar—Oadweina—Description of March across the Haud—Kirrit—Burao—Eil Dab—Bohotle.

BURAO.

July 7th, 1903.

Just arrived here from Galadi. Mail just leaving. Very well. Been marching without a halt since June 9th.

I had small fight, one man killed.

Somalis quite plucky.

GABATU.

July 20th, 1903.

Just a line to say I am well and going strong. The books are arriving all right, and I am reading them, as now I have a short rest from the trekking.

We are here grazing the ponies. They have made me Adjutant of the S.M.I., so I have plenty to do, although we are not marching.

When I have time I shall write you a long letter.

GABATU.

July 27th, 1903.

I am getting lots of parcels of chocolate and soup squares. Do not send any more chocolate till I let you know, as I have a lot stored up, and the heat melts it.

I am trying to unravel this tangled skein of Somali M.I. Between changing officers and one thing and another they have got into a nice mess when I was away on the Galadi side. I am engaged in counting and selecting ponies—buying Somali ponies and Abyssinian ponies, and counting saddles, bits, reins, clothing, etc., all mixed up in an inextricable mess.

Egerton has turned up, I believe, and is at Sheikh. They say he is a very sound man. I hope he is.

Your story is a splendid one—quite one of the best I have ever read—and has been much appreciated by many officers out here.

I am in perfect health.

When this beastly show will be over I cannot conceive—anyhow I will not get any leave, as they have made me Adjutant, and whoever goes I won't.

I had a letter the other day from Simpson, the Adjutant of the 92nd. They are up in the Murree Hills for the hot weather with two companies in the plains. Glad I am not there. Now I have to make up returns for the regiment, so good-bye.

El Hinar.

August 3rd, 1903.

I hear there is some chance of a show on the frontier later on, but if possible I shall come home even for a month, although the passage is very expensive. They may second me again of course, in which case I may not go to India at all, but back to the 1st battalion. However, it is useless to speculate. I may be in China for all I know.

I am glad Buffles is not troublesome, as he is a bit of a warrior when properly roused. I have taken many photos, but have no proper means of despatching them home.

This letter will first go by a S.M.I. Sepoy for thirty miles, then on a camel for 120 miles, then across the Gulf in a beastly little steamer to Aden, and so home.

El Hinar.

August 9th, 1903.

We have a rumour here that the Mullah has crossed to Arabia, and is leaving the Sultan here to carry on the show, but we think this is the merest sham.

We have a lot of new officers—a Captain Farquhar, Coldstream Guards, and a Lt. Smith, D.C.L.I., both good fellows. We have also a wild Irishman, a doctor called O'Grady, full of life and fun.

At present one letter per week is my maximum, and that, of course, is home.

If this show lasts a year I am almost certain to get a couple of months' leave at the end of that time —provided the show is over. A lot of fellows have got leave, but it is all sick leave, and I am so beastly healthy that I daren't try any of these games on.

The books are a great blessing.

OADWEINA.

August 16th, 1903.

Papers, books, etc., arrive now regularly. We are simply shifting about from place to place in search of water and grazing. This is about eight miles from El Hinar, where I last wrote from, and about forty miles due west of Burao. I do not know when they will advance, but I expect soon—that is, in about one month.

I never wrote you about the finish up on the southern side, and the fear-stricken flight across the Haud, but will do so when I have the spirit moving me.

They started by stealing out of Galadi at dead of night, left me sitting there with twenty-five S.M.I. till next day, as a kind of bait I imagine, and so it was every day for the whole of these twenty-nine horrible days.

When the attack was supposed to be coming from behind, then I had to wait eight miles behind,—when from in front, then I was six to eight miles in front with my Somalis. I suppose it was necessary in a way to have a kind of bait, but it was a

most trying experience, as, if an attack had come, I was bound to be cut off and destroyed, my stragglers conveying the news to the column.

I stuck it out all right, but am not, I think, quite what I was. Had I had another white man with me it would not have been such a strain, but I was alone with notably uncertain troops right out of touch, each day more and more certain that the almost certain attack would come.

I am in excellent health. I am taking photos., but have no means of sending them home, and fear they may spoil.

Had a long letter from General Spens from Aden. He is on his way to Jubblepore.

KIRRIT.

August 30th, 1903.

This place is about five miles N. of Garrero.

I get books and papers regularly, also this week shortbread and cake—a great treat.

Things are quiet and I have little news, and also am rather tired—but in best health.

Very sleepy.

Note.—A telegram was sent to David to come home—" Leave indispensable Health. Telegraph."

KIRRIT.

September 13th, 1903.

When I got your telegram I thought you were all dead—such expense—B'Gosh !

Tell the Governor. . . .

I had a row with . . . but have raised the whole of the X—X—X—in consequence. I am ably backed up, however, by . . . (it's getting dark).

I caught some people the other day, and was thanked in orders by General Egerton. I am as fit as fit and as fat as fat. I have not had a soda for eight months, and very little whiskey, but milk (camel's), and meat (fat), and chupaties and nasty tin stuffs. I am having a very good time and expect to be home in four months.

BURAO.

September 28th, 1903.

I am here at present recruiting trying to get this show together again. The men, who were stupidly treated by . . . deserted, and the whole thing went to pieces. He tried his tricks on with me, so I resigned the adjutancy. I am now commanding a wing, and there is to be no adjutant.

The governor asks me for my daily routine. Well, I live here in a thing called a " goingi " or hut made of rushes. I get up about 5 a.m., then I see any men who wish to see me, and draw rations. Then I go to Colonel Cobbe's hut (I live with him) for breakfast. Then I do my writing, then I have some tea or coffee and a biscuit. In the afternoon various things turn up, and at 5.30 I see recruits. Then, when the sun sets, I regard the day as over,

and have my first drink. I have always made a point, in hot countries, of never drinking till the sun has disappeared. Then I wander about and see people I know, and ask questions, and generally fool about. I get to bed about 9.30.

My troop ponies are grazing sixty miles away at Wadango.

My establishment of servants is a terrible trouble and expense. My cook gets 40 Rs. (some fellows have to pay as much as 60) a most ridiculous price, as he is a beastly bad cook. My man gets 30 Rs., and my small boy 10 Rs. You see, one must get a man who can speak English or Hindustani, and these Somalis (greediest people on earth) take every advantage of this.

The second rains are on here now. They come as a rule every evening about 6 p.m., and last about three hours—very heavy.

EIL DAB.

October 25th, 1903.

I was out on a reconnaissance a few days ago, up the Nogal valley : saw nothing. It is a fine country, rather mountainous, and very much like S.A., except that there is low bush instead of grass. We got soaking wet, as we struck three days' rain, and we had no change of clothes.

I am in good health. I have had very little luck shooting, but have got two good deer-heads, and some dik-dik. I shall probably lose them as I

lose everything out here. I have lost my interpreter and right-hand man, Abdullah—a great loss. He has gone back to Swayne. Things political are quite amusing out here. Ax and Bx fight like cat and dog—and Egerton looks on in amusement.

I shall send photos., but just at the moment they are astray. The photos. of the dog and people were very good. The handkerchiefs were a great treat, and the red one attracted shouts of laughter and delight from my men. A long letter next time.

BOHOTLE.

November 7th, 1903.

Here I am again! We are off at 12 o'clock to-night to Damot to see if we can catch anybody. Much more likely to be caught ourselves. I am still commanding my wing of S.M.I., and have got a very good lot of men. We must finish this show soon as the water is giving out all round, and the second rains seem to be over.

The best map you can get to watch the operations is the War Office map of "A portion of Somaliland." I just missed seeing S. the other day. He came into Wadango one night, and I marched out the following morning. I hear he is fit, and going strong. He is with a mule convoy. He has had a lot of experience in this kind of work, I hear. The nights are now getting very cold, but the days are hot. Farquhar has been off getting remounts.

CAMEL CORPS. SOMALILAND.

[*Face page* 183.

Burao—Bohotle

BOHOTLE.

November 25th, 1903.

We are back from Damot, and I expect will be stuck here for some time. I am sending by this post five spools of photos., and trust they will come out all right, but I am afraid some of them are rather old. I hear S. is in here, so shall probably see him. He has been changed from mules to camels.

I am in great health and spirits.

BOHOTLE.

December 2nd, 1903.

Getting near to Christmas again. I wonder where I shall spend my next one?

We are very quiet here. I think Egerton is going to do his show with Indian troops as much as possible. There has been friction between the Indian and African officials—not a good thing at all, and the Indian troops are by way of getting angry; personally I think with some cause.

We had as good a show as possible on St. Andrew's Day, but we have few luxuries. A cake of soap every fortnight would be of great use as I am constantly running short.

My great pal here is Farquhar of the Coldstreams—a most excellent fellow. We live together, a small mess of two, and have great trouble with our Somali cooks, and Somali "boys." The gloomy December days are with you now, I suppose, but

here is the eternal sun and glowering sky, and the haze and the hot smells. I am in excellent health. I think every one has had something wrong with them except me.

BOHOTLE.

December 4th, 1903.

A Merry Christmas. I am in best health, and going strong. I am just going to have lunch, viz.—rice, and scraggy meat, and oh, such very bad tea.

I hope . . . . is not disappointing. The top of the ladder is, I imagine, reached by climbing round the broken steps. Those whose arms are strong reach the top.

I expect we may go to Galadi from here, and in that case letters will be impossible. If we go to Galadi we shall see the Abyssinians, which will be interesting.

You might send some buns and stuff for Christmas, and a plum-pudding. They say this show will be over in two months.

A Merry Christmas to all friends.

BOHOTLE.

December 17th, 1903.

I am in the best of health, and going very strong.

We are still here waiting for the advance. The Abyssinians are due shortly at Galadi. I have little news.

Burao—Bohotle

BOHOTLE.

December 24th, 1903.

I have written an article. I have written it hurriedly—necessarily so. Most of it was written sitting under a bush on grazing ground. Two officers here, one who was in S.A., and one who was not, have read it, and both think it very good, and extraordinarily accurate. Of one thing I am certain, soldiers will read it with interest. The bitter feeling in the regular army on the subject dealt with cannot be exaggerated, and I think the article will be welcomed by all soldiers. I have cut down description as much as possible, as the S.A. war has already been fully described.

I am full of health.

The cakes have not yet arrived. We get no parcels now, as the transport is all required for ordinary rations.

THE TWO EDITORS

The Article referred to in previous Letter

CHAPTER XV

THE TWO EDITORS

By ANYBODY

" Ye hindered and hampered and crippled ; ye
Thrust out of sight and away
Those that would serve you for honour, and
Those that served you for pay."
KIPLING. " Five Nations," p. 134.

THE Editor of a Great Paper sat in his own special easy chair, after his own specially good dinner, smoking his own special brand of cigar. A dainty cup of coffee stood on a natty little table by his side.

As this important person gently puffed his cigar his face became ever and anon wreathed in satisfied little smirks. These smirks were indicative of work well done, followed by a good dinner slowly digesting, assisted by a comfortable chair and a cheery fire.

This Editor was reflecting on a particularly good and scathing article he had himself penned with his own great editorial hand that day. He gave a short laugh, and smiled reflectively at the golden spirit in his liqueur glass. The article had been on a subject always well received by all classes and sure to be specially well received when written by so

able and convincing a hand as his own. His subject had been " The Shortcomings of an Army," as exemplified in that ignorant, lazy and luxurious person the British Officer. It was the second article of a series which he was writing. Word pictures of British Officers having luxurious baths in luxurious tents—of British Officers leaving their regiments in the field and having " sprees " in Cape Town—of British Officers having concerts in camp, while their men either did or did not go on picket as they felt inclined.

" I should like to see for myself," murmured the Great Man gently.

" I think I can be of some use," said a Voice.

Our Editor sat up with a start in his own special easy chair. Standing by his chair and gently smiling was a dapper little man with singularly clear eyes. The Editor gazed inquiringly at this apparition.

" Yes, I wished to see you," said the Little Man. " You are a great writer, a fine scholar, and a power for good or evil in this land. It is my business to see such as you. You are writing a series of articles on The British Officer. You wish, I understand, to actually see this monstrosity on the field, so that your third and final article may give him—shall we say ?—the *coup-de-grâce* ? Very well, then you must come with me. Nay, there will be no trouble, and you will be at the office at the usual hour to-morrow morning. You wish to know who I am ? I am the Editor of a Greater Paper than yours.

The Two Editors

I am the Editor of Truth—not the sixpenny edition published in this city—but Truth which men have been looking for, for many years, at the bottom of a well.

. . . . .

" What place is this ? " asked the Editor.

" This," replied the Little Man, " is Cape Town."

" And what," said the Editor, " is that collection of tents ? "

" That is a Rest Camp, consisting of details of different regiments. Mostly foot-sore and weary men," said the Little Man.

" Who is that very pale young man walking about ? " asked the Editor.

" One of the officers in charge of these details. He was sick and has been sent back here to rest," said the Little Man.

" He should be in his bed," said the Editor (a kindly soul).

" He must assist the other officers, who are all more or less feeble. All fit officers are required at the Front. He has been discharged from hospital some time," said the Little Man.

" Well, I hope he has plenty of port wine and luxuries. He looks pretty bad," said the Editor.

" He has £80 a year from his father and cannot afford to buy port wine," said the Little Man. " He draws his rations and buys such tinned foods as he can afford."

" Oh ! " said the Editor.

. . . . . .

" What is that large building ? " asked the Editor.

" That is the Mount Nelson Hotel," replied the Little Man. " Let us go into the dining-room and see them feed."

" There," exclaimed the Editor, " is an officer ! "

" The Senior Medical Officer of Cape Town dining with a local magnate," replied the Little Man.

" There are no more officers," said the Editor.

" No," said the Little Man.

" That man over there is enjoying himself," cried the Editor, pointing to the back view of a stout gentleman laughing heartily over his champagne.

" Yes," said the Little Man. " That gentleman has been staying here for some months. That is your correspondent."

" Damn ! " said the Editor.

. . . . . .

The rain fell in torrents—blasts of cold wind fell at intervals—it was very dark.

" Who are these two men ? " asked the Editor.

" An officer and a corporal visiting sentries. This is the picket line," replied the Little Man.

" They must be very wet," said the Editor.

" Yes," said the Little Man. " There has been a lot of rain lately. Their clothes have not been properly dry for four days."

" Where does the officer sleep ? " asked the Editor, looking round for a tent.

" There," replied the Little Man, pointing to a small waterproof sheet and a blanket lying in a little puddle of water.

" He can't sleep there ! " cried the Editor.

" He will," replied the Little Man.

" Look at that man, standing up there," said the Editor. " His coat is all ragged."

" That is a sentry," said the Little Man.

" He will die of exposure," said the Editor.

" Perhaps," said the Little Man. " He hopes not. There will be an action to-morrow morning."

" They cannot fight well, all wet like that ! " said the Editor.

" Yes, they can. They will follow their officers," said the Little Man.

" All these pickets seem very well placed," said the Editor. " I could not pass through without being seen."

" That is the business of an officer," said the Little Man. " They know what to do. The officer commanding this battalion has been on active service for the last seven years."

" What are they ? " asked the Editor.

" Regular Infantry," replied the Little Man. " You wrote about them in your last article."

" Yes," said the Editor. " And I said they knew nothing."

" I know you did," replied the Little Man.

. . . . .

" Who are these people on that ridge ? " asked the Editor.

" These are Boers," replied the Little Man.

" They seem uncertain what to do," said the Editor. " They appear to be quarrelling amongst themselves."

" They're in a bit of a fix," replied the Little Man, " and each man thinks his own way the best. They have no discipline."

" I thought that was a good thing," said the Editor. " No discipline—no red tape."

" I know you did," said the Little Man.

" These Boers," continued the Little Man, " were surprised this morning at dawn by a column under Snooks (three regiments of Regular Cavalry). He left his baggage and crossed sixty miles in twenty-two hours, carrying two days' provisions on the horse and man. Burghers' ponies are dead beat, and they see Snooks' dust in the distance."

" But I said in my last article that the Boers could walk round our people, and that our cavalry were the laughing-stock of Europe," said the Editor.

" Yes," said the Little Man. " Let us go over and stand amongst the Brethren."

The Editor took up his position on the highest point of the kopje, nowhere very high, but long: loose stones everywhere, with here and there a large boulder. There were three Boers just beside him. One, a very dark man dressed in breeches,

home-made canvas gaiters and an old threadbare Norfolk jacket, was clearing his foresight with his thumbnail. Another was a small wiry man, with an unwholesome-looking tallow face and a scraggy beard, wearing curious-looking trousers tied with string at the knee. The third was a buck nigger carrying two rifles. Just below them, cunningly placed, were their ponies held by a child.

The Editor looked round. There were many Burghers. Parts of the Bethel, Ermelo, and Carolina Commandos were there. Great care had been taken by all to place the ponies out of sight, and at the same time to keep them handy.

The Little Man pointed to the ponies—

"Their strength and their weakness," he said. "The moral effect of being able to gallop off at any moment has been fatal many times to the plans of their commanders. Had they had fewer ponies, been, in fact, less of an entirely mobile force, the aspect of the war might have worn at one time a strangely different complexion. The march from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg was full of instances of what I say."

"I thought," said the Editor, "that from the beginning we learned from the Boers how to wage war."

"Ay," said the Little Man, "and how *not* to wage war."

The Editor looked thoughtful.

The Editor felt the hot afternoon sun, and the

glare off the long stretch of open veldt in front hurt his eyes. He felt the hot smell of rifle-oil from the rifles held by the nigger (they were beautifully clean), and the foul smell of sweating, filthy men.

Suddenly the red-bearded man fired. The big man was looking through his glasses.

"Close up, Right!" said he. "What range?"

"850," replied Red-Beard.

"What is that?" asked the Editor.

"Getting the range of that big boulder in front," replied the Little Man. "They watch for the dust of the bullet."

This was war.

A cloud of dust was now just visible to the Editor a long way off.

"How did our people know where to find these people? They seem to trek where they please, without any base. The country is vast," said the Editor.

"The Intelligence," replied the Little Man.

"I said we had no Intelligence," said the Editor.

"I know you did," replied the Little Man. "Have these glasses," said he.

The Editor looked, and the distance seemed to leap in towards him. He saw a lot of men standing by their horses. The British cavalry had halted. Then far in advance of these he picked out a solitary man mounted. Then he saw another. There were a lot of these solitary men.

"What are these?" asked the Editor.

" The screen," replied the Little Man.

" Our people have all halted," said the Editor.

" Some of them," replied the Little Man. " Snooks detached one regiment at dawn. They are over there now," pointing away over the shining, shimmering veldt to the left rear of the Boer position.

The Editor looked. There was nothing to be seen.

" Do the Burghers know that ? " he asked.

" No," replied the Little Man.

" I thought they always knew these things, and led our people into traps ? " said the Editor.

" I know you did," replied the Little Man simply.

The Little Man pointed to a line of blue hills away in the far distance on the right.

" Look," said he, " watch the hills."

And the Editor, watching, saw a very curious thing. A light, as of a great match, had been lit, flickered halfway up the range, so it seemed; flickered, and went out. Then it flickered again, and suddenly a bright, steady light shone out and it began to twinkle.

" God's Truth," cried the Editor, " what's that ? "

" Heliograph," replied the Little Man. " Brummington with a battalion of guards and two M.I. battalions."

" They are very opportune," said the Editor.

" They were sent there," said the Little Man.

" Who sent them ? " asked the Editor.

" K," replied the Little Man.

" Do our people over there," pointing to the cavalry, " know that the Boers are here ? " asked the Editor.

" No, they can see nothing," replied the Little Man. " But the Brigadier knows, of his experience, that this is a likely place."

Just then the Editor saw about twenty of the Brethren, leading their ponies, sneak round the right of the kopje into an underfeature, which ran towards the British, at right angles to the Boer position.

" Watch ! " said the Little Man.

The Boers crept along until well into the underfeature. Then they mounted and galloped, finally halting, still concealed, to the left flank of the British scouts. The scouts went slowly past. The Boer Commandant grinned.

" What is the idea ? " asked the Editor.

" They will snipe the main body of British, and try to draw them off to the right, thus exposing their right flank to the main lot here as they swing round," said the Little Man.

" Bless me ! " cried the Editor.

Suddenly there was a crackle of firing from the direction of the Boer decoy. The next thing the Editor saw was the Boer party galloping wildly back to the kopjes followed by the bullets of the " Screen " who were now dismounted and firing.

All the Brethren did not come back.

" A squadron was covering the underfeature. Snooks did not like the dead ground," explained

the Little Man. "Boer position clean given away now."

The Boer Commandant cursed.

"They must be regulars," he said. "Covered everywhere."

The Editor gazed at him. Here was a quaint thing! The "Screen" was still advancing. Several Boers, perhaps better dressed than the others, were arguing together.

"Commandants disagreeing," explained the Little Man.

Many of the Brethren also joined the argument, shouting from where they lay.

"Ah," said the Editor. "Independence in the field! A great thing."

The Little Man said nothing. So intent were the Boers on their dispute that they did not notice a thin column of dust away to the left rear.

"Hardy with the 22nd Lancers. They will come straight for this kopje. Snooks got their light ten minutes ago," explained the Little Man.

The cavalry in front had now closed with the scouts, and were advancing dismounted with about twenty yards' extension. The horses remained behind out of range of the kopje.

The Boers opened fire. The British were all lying down. Hardly a movement could be seen in the grass. The Boers went on firing. Still the smell of hot oil, of sweating men, the sickening, head-achy smell of cordite. Red-beard was moistening his lips;

he seemed thirsty. The British ran forward again. Suddenly a sharp fire came from the right front. That d——d squadron again. They had forgotten all about them with their arguments. The cavalry in front opened fire. The Editor heard the sharp double report of the ·303, and the winging whisper of the bullets.

Red-beard was hit. He rolled over on his back. His mouth was full of dirt. He was dead.

Suddenly a loud shouting. Boers got up and ran about. Every one shouted orders. Men fell thickly. All was confusion. The 22nd Lancers were in action in rear with two colt guns.

" Let's get out of it ! "

Many were captured, many were killed, many got away to the right. A lot of British were killed: two officers. The sun still shone. The grass waved about. A little bird chirped near the Editor. The horses were taken to water at a Vlay.

" Wonderful ! " said the Editor. " I thought it was only Colonials who could do such things."

" Yes, I know you did," said the Little Man.

Away to the right, where the flying burghers had gone—

" Boom ! Boom ! "

" Brummington's guns ! " said the Little Man.

. . . . .

" What is this ? " asked the Editor

" A small railway station," replied the Little

Man. " You can see the blockhouse line running along the railway."

The Editor looked and saw that strange sight which those who saw it will never forget. As far as the eye could see on either side of the little station, close to the railway line, were little summer-house-looking erections connected by an enormously strong wire fence. It looked, for all the world, like the fence on one side of a paddock for keeping in wild and dangerous beasts. And so it was.

" Who are these ? " asked the Editor, pointing.

" That is the column you saw in action to-day," replied the Little Man. " They will remain here to-night and join up with their transport and infantry to-morrow. There is the Brigadier and his staff," pointing to a small group. " Let us go over and hear what they are saying."

A small man, somewhat dirty and unshaven, was sitting on the ground with a blanket over his knees. (There was a keen wind.) Next him sat a young fellow, also much bedraggled, with a similar blanket. Other two men sat close by.

" Sorry we've run so short, sir," the young man was saying. " We've been out a bit longer than I expected."

" That's all right," said the Brigadier, who had just dined off half a tin of kippered herrings and a ration biscuit, with the tiniest drop of whisky (the last drop) to wash it down. " The men, poor devils, can't have anything at all. This is the third day.

Can't carry more than two days, horses won't stand it. They're knocked up as it is. The 100th Hussars are awful."

"Dear me!" said the Editor. "This is dreadful. They should have good food after such frightful fatigue."

"They're used to it," replied the Little Man.

"But," exclaimed the Editor, "I said in my last article that the regulars insisted on carrying all sorts of luxuries, and that the column commanders did not back K. up, but hampered him in every way."

"Listen," said the Little Man.

A sapper from the telegraph office in the station handed a telegram to the A.D.C.

"What is it?" asks the Brigadier.

"Chief," says the A.D.C.

"Read it," says the Brigadier. His voice sounded a trifle weary.

"'Dated Pretoria 17th, Your G. 182. Much disappointed so many escaped stop. You should be more vigorous stop. Cannot understand your request for more remounts. Ends.'"

. . . . .

"What is this?" asked the Editor.

"Portion of a letter to your firm from your correspondent in Cape Town," replied the Little Man.

The Editor reads—"It will interest you, I know, to hear that our old friends the Regulars have

been at it again. Brigadier Snooks with a column consisting of three regular cavalry regiments attempted to follow up a Commando. He was, however, unable to go at more than a snail's pace, so hampered was the column with officers' baggage, pianos, etc. The Boers nearly all escaped, but I believe many were afterwards captured by a regiment of our splendid Colonials. It seems that the O.C. of this regiment, hearing of Snooks' failure, dashed out on his own initiative, covering an enormous distance in a short time. Compare this with the indolence of the regulars ! "

" Any truth in this about the Colonials going out ? " asked the Editor.

" No," said the Little Man. " A Cape Town canard."

" I trusted this man," said the Editor.

" I know you did," replied the Little Man.

. . . . .

The Editor was watching a M.I. battalion scouting ahead of a column. There was some sniping on the left flank. A small party detached itself from the main body of the battalion, and cantered sharply towards the firing. They were going apparently directly towards the Scouts, but when close up, they suddenly changed direction and nipped round a small kopje at top speed.

" Tock-Futt," " Tock-Futt," " Tock-Futt," went the Mausers.

" Bagged two of 'em," said the O.C. " They can't get away ! Well done, Jones ! "

" That was smart," said the Editor. " Who are these ? "

" One of the newly-raised M.I. battalions, formed of companies drawn from the infantry regiments out here. Six weeks' training," replied the Little Man.

" Six weeks ! " cried the Editor. " But surely they had some previous training in mounted work ? "

" No. Many of them are Reservists, straight from butchers' and bakers' shops. Never been on a horse in their lives."

" Who trained them ? " cried the Editor.

" British Officers," replied the Little Man.

. . . . .

Shrill screams of steam whistles,—strong smell of grease,—hoarse cries—cries of meeting trucks.

" A junction," said the Little Man.

A tired-looking young officer is standing on the platform talking to a " dour " looking man in civilian clothes.

" Line clear yet for the Armament trains ? " asks the officer.

" Very nearly," says the man sulkily.

" The Railway Staff Officer and a Dutch station-master," says the Little Man.

" Oh ! A Royal Engineer officer, I suppose ? " said the Editor.

" No," replied the Little Man. " Infantry of the line. Wounded in the knee. Can't march very well."

" How can he know anything of the working of trains and railways ? " exclaimed the Editor.

" He's picked it up. Had to. He's responsible to the chief for all that goes on here. He has a bad time of it with that sulky brute of a station-master. Double duty just now. The other fellow's sick," replied the Little Man.

" I can't understand it. What training has he ever had for such work ? "

" The best of all trainings, begun by his English mother, and continued at a great Public School: self-reliant, proud of his kind, comes of a class that never says, ' I can't,' or ' I'm done.' The class, thank God, that you still draw your officers from," said the Little Man.

" The class and training which I deprecated in my first article," said the Editor. " I advised that all should be changed. I believed myself to be right. The Public believe what I say. They still think I was right."

" Ay ! " said the Little Man sternly. " It is you, and such as you, clever, even great men, on whose word the Public hangs, whose opinion the public accepts, who do infinite and irreparable harm, not from any evil intent, but from your own colossal ignorance !

" Come with me," he continued, " and I will

show you the British Officer making soldiers out of savages, administering in the uttermost parts of the earth, building up the Empire, pioneering civilisation, judges and soldiers too. I will show you British officers living and toiling where none have ever lived and toiled before, where white men cannot toil and live, and you will see them dying there, and none say ' Well done ! ' I will show you this, because it is the most wonderful thing in all God's wonderful world."

" Which way ? " asked the Editor.

There were so many ways.

" Northwards," replied the Little Man, " towards Somaliland."

BOHOTLE—ADEN

December 27th, 1903—*June 1st*, 1904

CHAPTER XVI

BOHOTLE TO ADEN: DECEMBER 27, 1903—JUNE 1, 1904

Bohotle—Wadango—Distress at missing Battle of Jibdali—Halin—Verses found in an old Note-book—Telegram.

BOHOTLE.

December 27th, 1903.

I AM doubtful about getting leave after this show, as they show no sign of seconding me, and I may be sent straight to India. The War Office have just discovered, after one year, that I am not serving as a transport officer, and as they apparently do not know in what capacity I am serving they show me in the Army List as serving with my regiment in India. I do not suppose if you asked them now that they could tell you where I was. It is a grand old institution, full of simple methods and ideas.

I am sorry we are losing the Colonel—a very fine soldier. B—— is a fine man.

I am glad you all like the dog so much.

We are off to Galadi the day after to-morrow

and then back here again, so I am writing this letter before starting. It will catch the next mail.

I have got the two books. They have afforded me and others great amusement.

WADANAGO.

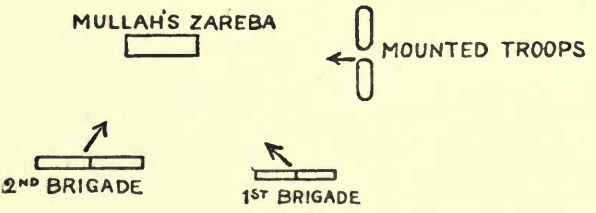
January 16th, 1904.

We have just been to Galadi and back. We missed the fight at Jibdali, which was bad luck. The Mullah's people could not make any stand against the fire, and fled, apparently, almost immediately.

I think Egerton has shown that, against a decent "bundabust," the Somali cannot make any show at all, and that the Somali bravery has been very much overrated.

The fight was apparently as follows :—

BATTLE OF JIBDALI



After being out so long, I am sorry to have missed this show. I fear there will be no more. We are moving on to Eil Dab to-morrow, and thence up to join Egerton.

The cakes have arrived, and the shortbread, and we have had a feast, also raisins and crackers.

I am going strong. I am turning over in my mind how to get leave after this, by fair means or otherwise.

HALIN.

February 4th, 1904.

We are, I hope, going to have a short rest here. The ponies need it badly. This is quite a different kind of country to that round about Galadi and the Southern Haud. Not a bush to be seen. Stony kopjes much like South Africa, and everywhere quite open.

The Mullah has fled across a waterless plain called the Sorl, in a north-westerly direction. His forces seem to be completely broken up and scattered, and his power has dwindled away for the time being to vanishing point. Of course, as long as he can escape with a few hundred rifles, he is still a nuisance, and might start again collecting men at any time.

General Egerton is, I believe, going to chase him, with base at Eil Dab, holding a line along the bottom of the escarpment of the Sorl Plain and Northern Haud.

I have a hut here built of sticks and palm leaves, very comfortable, and Farquhar lives in another hard by. There is a grand pool for bathing here, like a huge swimming bath—a tremendous luxury, as you may suppose.

We have had no letters for a long time, and parcels seem a thing of the past. I am in very best health.

Nothing seems to knock me out. We had to march all through the heat of the day (a very rare thing) the other day, across a sandy plain, and every one was "finish" except me. We have a little mess of three—Farquhar, myself and O'Grady the doctor. The cooking is bad and the crockery awful, but we have a very good time all the same.

February 8th, 1904.

I am with the 2nd Brigade, with my Somalis. I wrote you just the other day and have really no news.

Farquhar has gone off on detachment for a week, but he will be back presently.

Just got orders to be off on a raid, so must close up.

February 28th, 1904.

Just returned from a trek and post goes in half an hour.

We captured a lot of camels, and I got two rifles. My men all ran away at the first shot, but I managed to disperse the unfortunate creatures myself.

Nothing to tell except that I am well.

March 20th, 1904.

Just time for a line. We are going off to-morrow to try and guard the passes from the Sorl Plain, to stop old Mullah breaking through, and then, I

believe, we march for Burao, en route, I hope, for the shore. I think it quite likely I shall either leave for India or home in three months at latest—possibly in half that time, but one can never tell. Things seem to be fizzling a bit at home at the War Office.

Buffles is, as I warned you, a warrior. If any one broke into the house he would kill him as dead as a stone. It's bred in his bone. He is the famous old Boer watchdog breed—mostly retriever and a mastiff strain. He is a very strong dog, and will grow even more powerful.

BIYO MADDU.

April 4th, 1904.

How are you all? Nothing fresh here. We are stopping the mouth of a pass in the Sorl.

I am in great health and spirits. Papers arrive, and are the greatest blessing I have. Could you send a pound of tobacco, and 200 cigarettes, by next mail? Tobacco has run out here, and I am in a bad way.

SAME PLACE.

April 12th, 1904.

The very last piece of paper. Still sitting here making occasional darts after Karias. Very little food; no drink, no smoke, no tea, no sugar, no meat except camel which makes me ill. I am the only fellow who has not been sick. I have little news of any interest.

April 19th, 1904.

Here we sit in this beastly place. I got a box of cakes, five squares, and shortbread, also rusks. They have saved my life. We have no flour or biscuits left.

I exchanged half a plum cake for this paper (two sheets) and half bottle whisky. The rains have broken and last night it rained the whole night, but luckily I had a small grass hut made yesterday, —so escaped getting wet. I long for civilization and good food. By the way, did you find my Queen's medal in my box ? It was in a small wooden box in the bottom of the tin.

Have just had terrific thunderstorm. The ground which a minute ago was dry sand is now covered with small puddles of water. Now the rains have broken, I can see no object in our remaining here, as there is no use holding water when there is water all over the place. However, man proposes and the General disposes, so no one knows what may happen to us.

HALIN.

May 4th, 1904.

I am surprised at your not getting any letters for so long, as I have written every mail for some months. However, an enormous number of letters go wrong out here. A large box of biscuits and soup squares, also a pot of Bovril have arrived—this last a great thing, as we can have a cup in the

morning before starting on the march, and it is much better than tea.

This show must stop soon now, as no one knows whether the Mullah has any force left, or whether he is completely broken up, and it would be senseless to chase a myth.

I get papers and books regularly—very many thanks.

I am in my usual robust health and going very strong. We are off down to Eil Dab presently, and I do not think they can keep us much longer in the country. I am not sure of leave but shall have a try. They really ought to give me some. I put the end of June as the earliest, and the end of August as the latest date of leaving the country.

TELEGRAM

ADEN.

June 1*st.*

Persia by Marseilles.

End of Somaliland Letters.

VERSES FOUND IN AN OLD NOTE BOOK

MOUNTED INFANTRY. SOMALILAND.

[*Face page* 219.

THE S.M.I.

I wish my regiment could see me
Now, jogging along in the sun
With a lot of smelly Somalis
Behind, screaming just for fun.
No use trying to stop the row—
Too much trouble to try.
I used to be in the Regulars once—
Guards, Rifles, and Highlanders once
But now I'm Somali M.I.

The new fat officers come
From home, strut and
Spread their wings
And talk of " shocking officers "
And other curious things.
Our word of command is
" Come on, you swine ! " and
They either come or stay.
We used to drill them regular once
" For dismounted duty, dismount ! "—just once !
Seen them running dismounted once !
Now we've been with them more than once
" The men that run away."

A Captain of the Gordons

That is what we are
Known as—we are the
Push you require
To scout all day in
The bushes, with the
Officers drawing the fire.
Anything risky or bushy—then
You never forget to say
" Send out some Somalis
These men that run away."

I haven't got any temper
Left, I've no ambition
Now
But I know the stroke
With the jambok, and
The Somali word for
Sow.
Whoever we're with
We're scouting, well
In front, all day.
I've trekked from Galad to Badwein once,
Badwein back to Bohotle once,
And back to Galad more than once
With the men that run away.

The S.M.I.

That is what we are
Known as—we are
The Shots to blame.
If holes are made
In a ghee bag, and nothing
Left of the same,—
Any shortage of rations,—
" Stealing again " they say ;
" Flog some———Somalis,
The men that run away."

I'd like to be back with
My regiment as I left it
A year ago.
Trying hard
To forget the things I
Didn't ought to know.
When I think of the things I've done
And said
It almost makes me cry.
I said " Amool " to Somebody once—
Once, my ducky, and only once !
Goodbye ! the S.M.I.

BUFFLES AGAIN

BUFFLES' HOUR. FIFE.

[*Face page* 225.

CHAPTER XVII

BUFFLES AGAIN

DAVID had arranged that Buffles should go on to India in the "Nubia," and wait there until such time as he might follow, after the Somaliland campaign were over, but the arrangement fell through, and Buffles came back to Scotland in charge of the officers of the ship. They were very kind to the dog who made friends wherever he went. The voyage to Port Said when Buffles' master was with them was "the happiest voyage we ever had" one of the officers said. Buffles had to go to quarantine for three months, for although he had not landed in India he had been on a ship which had touched there and the authorities are particular. He was sent to Helensburgh, where he was most kindly treated, and as happy as the poor, lonely fellow could be under the circumstances. The three months over, Buffles came home.

Buffles was as gentle as a dog may be, but he was big, and strangers did not always understand him. It was not that he barked, for he rarely barked; but he was a very joyous dog, and as out on the free veldt he had been brought up to show his affection in the off-hand way of jumping up on one, catching

coat-sleeves and so on, he saw no reason to alter these ways in the Land of Walled-Gardens to which he had come. When he heard the gate open he would throw back his ears, and then proceed in a dignified, deliberate but determined way up the avenue to greet whoever might appear. Should the visitor meet him in a correspondingly stately and friendly manner, Buffles would wag his tail and accompany him or her to the house, but should the visitor draw back or dodge, Buffles would misunderstand the attitude and, thinking it was a game, cry " Come on and have some fun ! " and begin to instruct the visitor in South African ways. This invariably ended in a fright for the other player ; with whom on these occasions the sympathy always went, so that in the long run poor Buffles had the worst of it. Yet the dog was simply in fun. He was, of course, no respecter of persons.

If unfortunate inside the grounds this attitude was a serious inconvenience outside. He was rarely without the gate alone, yet all and sundry came with wild tales which could neither be proved nor disproved. It grew expensive ; but the expense was nothing compared to the anxiety that some injustice would be done to the dearly-loved dog. There was the girl who said her cloak had been torn off ; the man who said his overcoat had been spoiled ; the man whose umbrella was torn to pieces. The girl of the cloak's father arose in wrath, and sent the policeman ; the man in the overcoat came with

the police sergeant and demanded thirty shillings ; the man with the umbrella sent the police-sergeant for the price of the umbrella. Meantime Buffles looked out joyously on all and wagged his tail : except once when by some mistake of identity he barked at the police sergeant in the darkness. The sergeant, however, said little about that. But it was foolish of Buffles. There is a tradition in the family, that the umbrella was worth the ten shillings it cost. Buffles was racing behind a carriage to the station when the man with the umbrella appeared ; it was raining. The man saw Buffles bounding along and lowered his umbrella as a shield. Buffles had never seen an umbrella in this position before : an umbrella evidently walking on its own limbs. He barked. The umbrella quivered. Buffles bounded towards it barking loudly. The umbrella danced ; it danced in every way known to the framework of an umbrella ; it span ; it pirouetted ; it went up, it went down ; it went east, it went west. Buffles imitated it to the utmost of his power barking ; it was the most fascinating game he had played for many a day. Voices hailed him loudly from the carriage, but he heard them not. The carriage stopped and caught him and lifted him in and talked to him. Buffles craned his neck with wistful glances at the game he had left behind him.

The courting of the cat required tact on Buffles' part. He thought a great deal of the opinion of the big black pussy in the kitchen. If he had a coat

tied on in the cold weather off he would go at once to show pussy how grand he was. But it was pity, not admiration, that won pussy's heart. Buffles fought another dog. Which dog began the fight is not known, but it is supposed to have been the other, Buffles, however, won ; so no one wasted sympathy upon him, and he was walked home in disgrace. This was unfair, but police sergeants do occasionally get upon the edge of the strongest nerves. However, when at home it was discovered that Buffles' paw had been bitten. Then ensued remorse. So the paw was bandaged, and Buffles was told that he was the best dog that had ever lived and every one was so sorry he had a wounded paw. Buffles thought it all over and grew very sorry for himself. Next day he seemed unable to come downstairs, but as he had gone upstairs that morning it dawned upon his friends that there was an end to all things ; even to the pain of a bitten paw. So the door of the morning-room was left open and " Pussy ! " said one voice after another, " What a pretty pussy ! " Tarump ! . . . tarump ! . . . tarump ! limped three feet down as many steps. Poor old Buffles ! As jealous as his warm heart would let him be yet hampered by the dignity of that sore paw. Tarump ! tarump ! tarump ! Down he came on three paws into the morning-room. He placed himself between his family and his pussy : then he lifted the paw with the rag tied round it,

DAVID AND BUFFLES. FIFE.

[*Face page* 229.

and held it out for the cat's inspection. Pussy's subjection was complete.

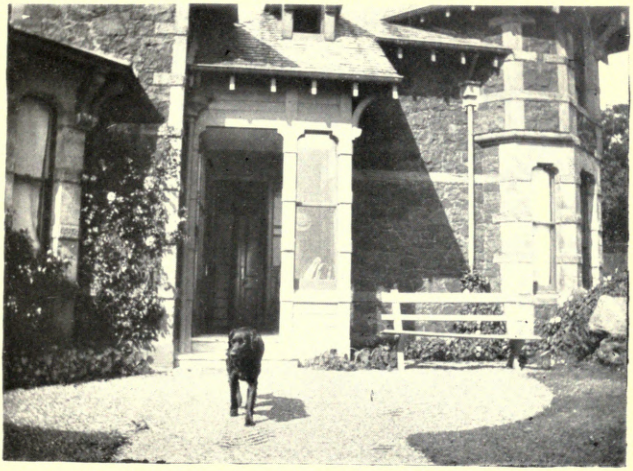
Meantime the months rolled on till two years had passed, and one day the telegram came which announced David's return from Somaliland. He came by Paris with two of his friends for the Longchamps races, and met some of his people in London. It was hard to realise that the three bronzed soldiers who chatted so lightly of mundane things had been at starvation's point hustling the wily Somalis not so many weeks before. One thing was not hard to understand, as kindly chaff passed from one to another, sometimes showing an undercurrent of deep memory—that soldiers gird themselves together shoulder to shoulder and never forget.

David was only allowed six weeks of rest. These were spent chiefly on the links of Fife. In August he was once more en route for India. This time he sailed in a P. & O. liner and was obliged to leave his dog behind, as this line does not take animals. Buffles would follow later when the weather was cooler. The date was left an open question ; but it settled itself without undue delay in the following way.

Buffles objected to tramps of a certain type. He discriminated ; he did not object to all tramps. One day in the snow a poor man came to the door with tears running down his cheeks, and Buffles stood up on the kerb and licked away the tears. On another day, however, came a tramp of different

aspect. Evidence seems to show that the man opened the inner door of the hall, for the dog was lying in the hall, and this door when last seen had been closed. Buffles, very rightly, it seemed to his people, resented this. The tramp fled, but sent in a claim for damages; to which, however, a deaf ear was turned. To give in would have been to admit the dog in the wrong, whereas it was held that he had acted rightly. But it was deemed advisable to send him to India with all dispatch.

Buffles was dressed in his coat. He wagged his tail, for this meant that "Buffles" was "going"—his favourite phrase. He jumped willingly into the carriage; as willingly into the train; and thence to his place beside the guard in the van of the Liverpool express to travel under the care of Messrs. Cook to India for the second time.



Awaiting his Master. Fife.

INDIAN LETTERS

THOBBA.

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CHAPTER XVIII

INDIAN LETTERS: AUGUST 8, 1904—MARCH, 1907

Voyage out—Thobba—Rawal Pindi Club—Peshawar—Out on Manoeuvres—Peshawar—Changla Gali—Peshawar—Muree Hills—The Khyber Pass—Peshawar—Kashmir—Peshawar.

P. & O. STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY
(BETWEEN GIBRALTAR AND ITALY).
August 13th, 1904.

I HAD a very comfortable journey, not a bit hot. We are now on our way to Brindisi to pick up the mails. This is quite unusual, I believe, but one of the boats which carry mails is off for some reason, and we are to go to Brindisi, and across to Port Said. I have a very nice deck-cabin and am altogether very comfortable. It is fairly hot at night but I sleep all right. I have been asking about Buffles. You must get a "special" big kennel made for him: otherwise he will be very uncomfortable. He will be all right arriving in India at the beginning of October, when I shall expect him. I have just this minute asked E—— L—— about the dog, and he says the end of October would be

a better date to arrive, but it would be useless keeping him longer. I think he had better come out soon, as he will begin to forget me.

NEAR PORT SAID.
August 17th, 1904.

I am having a pleasant voyage. We propose going ashore to-night to avoid the coaling. We have had naturally an uneventful voyage since leaving Brindisi. I am extremely fit and full of cheer.

THOBBA.
September 14th, 1904.

Here I am fit and fat. I am commanding E Company, and am going through musketry at present. It is very pretty up here, and very healthy, so I am in luck. I live in a great big tent on the side of a mountain with flowers all round. I have a good bearer, a sweeper, a bhisti, and a dhobie. I am off to play tennis in about five minutes—for exercise.

THOBBA.
October 5th, 1904.

There is little news here. I shall give you an idea of how the day is occupied. Every day except Sunday and Thursday we have a parade at 7,

My Tent.

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another at 9.30, and another at 10.45. Then, after that, we are more or less free. The other day I went for a ride among the hills, and had a most beautiful view of the Himalayas, covered with snow—a wonderful sight.

Generally in the afternoon there is something going on in Murree, about six miles from here. Either a gymkhana, or a hockey, or a football match. A band plays and there is tea, and drinks. This afternoon we are entertaining the sergeants and their wives at our tennis ground.

October 19th.

Just got your letter about Buffles. I am getting one of my brother-officers to bring him up from Bombay so he ought to arrive all right. He ought to do well out here, as he can always go to the hills in the hot weather.

October 20th, 1904.

I am sending you some photos. of this place and some taken on the way out.

RAWAL PINDI CLUB.

November 9th, 1904.

I am having a great time here. Buffles has arrived safely, and is as fit as can be. He fights just as much as ever he likes, and every one is quite pleased. He is a funny one, is Buffles! He is quite fond of his sweeper, the black man who

looks after him, but he considers him quite a servant.

We are in camp here at present, and rather uncomfortable.

This is a tremendous big station—five native regiments, four British regiments, one regiment of cavalry, and four battalions of artillery.

I expect we shall be off presently to Peshawar. I was up there staying with the Stauntons for a few days, and it was a very pretty place I thought. The idea, I believe, is to have a Highland brigade there. The Black Watch are coming up from Umballa.

I have bought one polo pony, and she seems a very good one, and is very good-looking.

November 18th, 1904.

I am staying here at present, as the regiment had to go to Peshawar marching, and I had to prosecute a court-martial. I go off to-morrow to catch them up. It is a nine days' march from Pindi to Peshawar across a flat plain. It is really quite cool here, and one feels very fit.

PESHAWAR.

November 28th, 1904.

Just arrived at Peshawar after long march. Shall be here probably two years.

January 3rd, 1905.

I stayed with General Spens for ten days at Christmas time, and had the best of times. I have

My Bearer and Tonga.
Thobba, India, 1904.

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been lunching with the Findlays to-day. I think I wrote you about the Pindi Review before. It is very cold here now—just as it is at home I expect. All the roses in my garden are being nipped by the frost.

February 21st, 1905.

We are still hard at work here. Tests, manœuvres, and what not. I have two ponies—one a polo pony, and one ordinary. We must play polo here as there is nothing else for exercise, and we must have exercise in this country.

Buffles is well.

March 15*th*, 1905.

To-morrow we hold our regimental races and the air is full of excitement. I am riding a pony of Davis's in the steeplechase, and one of my own in the flat race. It will be great fun. I am very busy just now getting my Company teams ready for the Annual Sports.

They have been very good to me here and have left me in command of my Company.

Out on Manœuvres.

March 8*th*, 1905.

This is a pouring wet day in camp on manœuvres. I expect if the rain continues we shall go back to Peshawar. These are what they call divisional

manœuvres. There are three district infantry and seven native cavalry regiments.

I am as fit as can be, and having a very happy time with the regiment. They call me "Sandy"—I really don't know why.

PESHAWAR.

April 5th, 1905.

I am judging to-morrow at the D.C.A., in what they call Bayonet v. Bayonet out here. I am keeping wonderful health out here. All climates seem to suit me.

April 19th, 1905.

The hot weather is now creeping upon us here—getting very stuffy. I go off in a week or two to Changla Gali to do a musketry course, and so escape part of the hot weather in the plains.

Buffles is well as can be, and has a little friend now called Elspie, Mrs. Findlay's dog. I am keeping her until they return.

April 26th, 1905.

People are now beginning to move off to the hills. Two companies of the regiment have gone to Cherat, and two go to Khanspen in about ten days' time. I go off to do my musketry course at Changla Gali to-morrow. It is some 8000 feet above the sea level. I stay there for two months and then come back to the plains.

I wish I could get a year's leave. I want a long rest. Too many excitements in the last few years.

Buffles is lying at my feet very full of himself, and the other "child," Elspie, is lying on a chair beside me.

CHANGLA GALI,
SCHOOL OF MUSKETRY.

Here I am doing my course of musketry. It's splendidly healthy and they keep me busy, 7 a.m. till 3.30 p.m., and one hour for lunch. Then we must do private study to keep up our knowledge. I think they are overdoing it a bit in the army just now. However, time will show. I shall not get any leave, I am afraid, as after this I have to study for my promotion, and I am anxious to do well in the exam. I am as fit as possible, as I have been ever since I came out.

There are twenty-five officers up here of all sorts of different regiments, British infantry and cavalry, native infantry and cavalry, and engineers. There is very little to tell you just now as one's daily life is so uncertain.

May 30th, 1905.

Still hard at musketry class. Very tired of it indeed.

Buffles is well and flourishing—also very fat. I am well and flourishing, and not quite so fat.

CHANGLA GALI.

June 6th, 1905.

Still hard at musketry. It's quite astonishing how much they make you learn that can be of no possible use in the field.

PESHAWAR.

July 12th, 1905.

I am off on two months' leave to the hills again, August and September. No Kashmir though! I have to go and study with a coach for my promotion, which I must pass well if possible, but it's fearfully expensive. You see, K has abolished "garrisoned classes," which taught this free of charge, as he says we should be taught in the regiment; but this is, of course, impossible. Hence, crammers are springing up in India. So not much leave for me, you see, this year.

I passed distinguished at my musketry course, much to my surprise.

July 18th.

Nobody here talks of anything but the heat. If they talked a little less I dare say they would feel it less. One can't go out between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., so one does not do very much. Day is much as follows:—

Parade	5.30 a.m.
Breakfast	7 a.m.
Office	8 a.m.
Sleep	—

Rifle Range, Thobba.
India, 1904.

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Polo three days a week at 6.30 p.m. This is the only thing that keeps one alive.

Dinner at	..	..	..	9 p.m.
Bed	..	..	..	1—2 a.m.

I am very fit as usual.

July 30th.

No news except that I am off to the hills to-morrow, and glad to get out of the heat. I am very well indeed here, however. I don't know what to tell you, every day is the same. To get to where I am going I go by train at night to Rawal Pindi and then by tonga to the hills. The tonga takes six hours to go.

I am working away, and have written a book on Tactics, which is at the moment in the hands of the Colonel for approval.

MUREE HILLS.
August 16th, 1905.

I am working very hard for my examination for promotion.

My life is very uneventful and there is nothing much of interest to tell. I'm as fit as can be.

ROWELL'S HOTEL,
MURREE.
September 3rd.

Here I am, working with a crammer and, much against my will, spending large sums of money!

His fees for tuition alone come to £40. However, it has to be done. I must get through these exams.

I am in famous health.

September 19th, 1905.

Still working away. Buffles is just outside my little sitting-room, lying down waiting for his din-din.

September 27th, 1905.

My exam. comes off on Monday. I am going to ask for a year's leave in Spring. I need it.

PESHAWAR.

November 8th, 1905.

Why this anxiety about my health? I am very well. I have been up for my "C" and "D," as they call the promotion exam. I have passed "C" all right, that is the practical part, and am waiting for the results of "D," in what is the written part. I hope I am through all right.

November 21st, 1905.

The weather here now is quite perfect, cold at nights and in the mornings and evenings, and hot enough during the day. Buffles is extremely well and sends his love.

Indian Letters

November 29th, 1905.

The Prince arrives here on Saturday, and there are great preparations being made in consequence.

I am very fit indeed, and there is no chance of sickness here for the next five months at any rate! So you needn't be anxious about my health. Every one gets fever now and then in India, you know.

March 2nd, 1906.

To-day I have been up the Khyber Pass (one of the great Frontier passes) with the Findlays.

March 13th, 1906.

I have just returned from a place called Sialkot where I was sent with our men who are trained for mounted infantry to put them through their annual course. Presently we shall go to the hills again, but this year I shall be with my company at a place called Cherat—not far from here. Four companies go there, and four remain here.

April 4th.

I am very fit indeed. Presently we shall begin punkahs and all the hot weather arrangements for trying to keep cool.

April 24th.

Half of the regiment has now gone to the hills and the other half is left here. It will get hot in about six weeks' time I expect.

E—— wrote you last mail that I had a touch of fever. It's the first go I have had for nearly a year, so I can't complain. I am quite better now.

There's no news except the temperature, which is 106, and is getting hotter every day.

At this time David went to Kashmir with his friends, Captain and Mrs. Findlay, for the only real holiday he had while in India. They went big game shooting, and David killed two very fine bears, the skins of which he brought home. Buffles was with him ; but notwithstanding this fact whenever Buffles saw one of these bears after an absence of any length of time he saluted it with a terrific " Bouf ! "

PESHAWAR.

October 23rd, 1906.

I am now back from Kashmir and hard at soldiering again. I am at present about twenty miles from Peshawar, doing what they call " Final Training." There are four of us here, W—— F—— and K——, and quite a cheery party, with about 300 men.

It was shortly after this that David decided to come home on a year's leave ; a rest long overdue, unfortunately. These foregoing extracts from the Indian letters do not give an adequate idea of his life there, but that is inevitable, because the incidents which made his talks about India so intensely interesting could not all be printed without the

special permission of those others who made up the tales.

The Gordon Highlanders were in Peshawar when King George and Queen Mary, as Prince and Princess of Wales, visited the station; but the story of their visit has been told over and over again. The following incident of the visit of the Ameer of Afghanistan, however, may not be generally known. When he arrived across the frontier there was at first much trouble to induce him to enter a train—as he had never seen this kind of locomotive before; but the trouble to get him *in* was nothing to the trouble it took to get him *out*! For he became so enamoured of the new style of travelling that he refused absolutely to leave the train at Peshawar station; he could not see why it could not go on till he arrived at his dwelling-place. He wished to go everywhere by train, rails or no rails, during his stay at Peshawar.

LEAVE

Photo by] [S. H. Dagg, Mussoorie.

DAVID. India, 1906.

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CHAPTER XIX

LEAVE

Aldershot—Aberdeen—Home—Osborne—London.

DAVID was granted a year's leave when he left India on the last day of March, 1907; the early summer was spent with his people, golfing in Troon and in Elie. The autumn was devoted to visits; one, to the Irish home of a comrade, Captain O'Grady, who had been with him in Somaliland. This was a very happy time; although when he passed through Belfast it was disturbed by the riots. David repeatedly said that, even knowing so well the discipline of soldiers, he wondered at the steadfast restraint they showed in very trying circumstances. He saw one woman throw a bottle and cut open a soldier's face; yet there was no retaliation. He explained that it was a very difficult matter for the commander of troops to know what to do in such circumstances as were brought about by these riots.

"If they fire," he said, "they're blamed; and if they don't they're blamed. They can't possibly do the right thing in a people's riot."

When David said good-bye to the old Irish home and to Ireland, Mike, a bright little Irish terrier of

pure breed, said good-bye too, and followed a new master to Scotland. Although Mike was highly bred, and had all the points of his breeding, he was not fond of a fight. But there was a Black Champion yet in India who was to be his friend in Scotland; and if Mike could have read the future, as he was tossed about on the Irish Channel, he would have read how his courage was to be born, as it is born in some of us, at the back of a defender who will not be beaten.

In September, while visiting some old friends, David received his commission as a Captain; but as there is no rose without its thorn, his leave was cut short by nearly six months, and he was ordered to join the first battalion at Aldershot. The War Office had given leave from India for a year, and as Aldershot was in England, they did not give weight to the consideration that David had not only earned a year's leave, but that after South Africa, Somaliland and India it was a necessity.

Buffles had been left in India till it were decided whether David should ultimately return or not; the dog was now sent for, but on arrival he had to go back to quarantine; happily, again to his comfortable quarters at Helensburgh.

David joined his regiment in Aldershot in November; he was fortunate in getting a week's leave at Christmas time, so that he spent a few days and Christmas Day at home; and a very happy New Year at Golspie with Captain and Mrs. Findlay.

In the early spring of the following year he was appointed to command the training of mounted infantry for the Highland Brigade at Longmoor. The weather was intensely cold, and when influenza attacked David he was forced to stay in bed for a few days in his hut, where he could not have a fire unless the door was left open on account of the smoke. After his duties at Longmoor he got a fortnight's summer leave in July, which was spent with his people golfing at Dunbar. Again in September he had six weeks' leave, when some of his friends, including his brother officer, the late Major Meiklejohn and his wife, visited him.

Buffles found fresh experiences awaiting him at The Hermitage, Troon; and a new friend in Mike. The friendship with Mike was not cemented until Buffles' prior claim to David was decided. After that Buffles proved the staunch friend of the little Irish terrier even under sore provocation. At first, however, if both were in the garden, it was deemed advisable to shut one into the enclosure round the croquet green. One day both dogs were seen within this enclosure, Mike with a bone, Buffles without one. Buffles looked uncanny, and a rush to the rescue was made. When the croquet green was reached Buffles was standing looking about him with a mystified expression; Mike was sitting at a corner, a somewhat curious shape; no bone was to be seen. The conclusion was that Mike's curious shape was due to Buffles'

wrath ; so Buffles was called away and then investigations were made as to Mike. When Mike's corner was reached the little dog looked up from a comfortable position, the bone between his paws. He had been sitting on the bone.

The two would trot off together in the morning, two pictures of innocence ; an hour or so afterwards they would return by the road from the wood, as innocent of mien as when they left. That which had happened in the meantime belongs to unwritten history.

During the latter part of this leave David made up his mind to apply for the Adjutancy of the 4th Battalion of the Gordons at Aberdeen. He needed a longer rest than he had had, and he saw a prospect of this if settled in one place as adjutant.

He left for Aldershot in the beginning of December, and in the following February he was appointed Adjutant in Aberdeen. Before he left he got a severe chill, and a strain which affected his heart ; but the doctors allowed him to leave for Aberdeen. From the day he arrived at Aberdeen he was not well, though he addressed meetings, drew up a new form of rules and regulations which was printed for the use of his new battalion, and started a class for sergeants ; and on a bitter, sleety day rode at the head of his men on their march out. In these three weeks, ill as he was, he left his mark and inspiration.

The physician who attended him confined him to

bed for ten days, and then insisted on his taking sick leave ; the only sick leave he ever had.

So David came home for the last time, leaving the bright castles he had built so happily behind him ; but with him came the hopes and ambitions of a strong character, the brightness of an unselfish life.

He was at home from March till June, a daily visitor being his kind medical attendant, Dr. MacIntosh. He went to Glasgow in June to be under the valued advice of Sir George T. Beatson, who advised him to go to Osborne in July that he might at once have the advantage of a finer climate and constant medical supervision. He made many new friends among the officers who were there like himself on sick leave. He enjoyed Osborne, under the care of Colonel Hickson, Acting Governor ; the fine air enabled him to drive and take gentle walks, though he had some bad days.

The Cowes week brought great doings to Osborne. King Edward, with Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria, visited Osborne more than once, and on one occasion the King was introduced to all the officers and residents.

" You are one of my brother-officers," the King said, amongst other kind remarks, to David. King Edward was Colonel-in-Chief of the Gordon Highlanders.

Another gala day was when the Czar and the Czarina visited the Solent in their yacht. King Edward and Queen Alexandra, the Czar and the

Czarina, with their family and entourage, the Prince and Princess of Wales, Princess Beatrice, and many other notable people came one day to visit the old home, where most of them had spent so much of their youth. The day before they came the place swarmed with detectives. Two hundred were inside the grounds, and would pop up from the grass or out from a shrub and startle innocent strollers. At that time David had an attack of malaria, so he watched from his window which overlooked the grounds, and across the Solent. He was much interested in the detectives threshing the shrubs with their stout canes, and lurking about looking for other lurkers.

But all was well, and a very happy, bright party drove up in motors and carriages to Osborne House, and walked about the house and grounds chatting with each other. A group interested David—consisting of three ladies and the young Czarewitch, who looked very bright and bonny in a white sailor suit. One of the ladies was an English princess; the others evidently Russian. They stood talking on the pretty terrace just below David's window. From this terrace a flight of stone steps leads down to a flower-garden, with many cunning places to hide in; such as grottoes. The young Czarewitch watched his opportunity, and darted down the steps into nowhere. A foreign voice called from the group of ladies in terrified accents:—

"Where is the boy?"

Dismay! Who can tell what dreadful surmises flashed through these three hearts?

Like a darting sunbeam the young Czarewitch flew up the steps, dropped at their feet, and, lifting his little yachting-cap, made a most ceremonious bow. Then a flood of Russian words fell upon him.

The young Russian princesses had the same happy ways. There seemed to be no dread of anything in their visit except that they might not see everything; that their short time should prove too short. Never were happier children, more unselfconscious; and when at last they were gathered together by their special attendants to enter the waiting carriages and say "Good-bye," one could imagine they were saying to each other, "You may go in that carriage; I'm going in this one."

At last they were off, waving good-bye to Osborne.

It was at this time that the squadron in the Solent was illuminated at night on two occasions. David's windows commanded the view, and, having seen the first, he asked his mother to come up in the evening from Cowes that she might see the second illumination on the occasion of the Czar's visit. The night happened to be especially suited for the magnificent display. The ships lay on the still waters, and if one had awakened from a deep sleep to gaze over the Solent in the quiet night, one would have thought that Aladdin and his lamp had passed over it. Each warship of whatever class

seemed to be cut out of a single diamond ; each rope, each mast, each outline marked by the finest cutting ; a sight far beyond one's ideas of fairyland. There was the great solemn water, and, resting on it, ships cut out of diamonds. No fairies peeping in and out, no fanciful flower-gardens, no dance of the brownies, no kind genie watching over the little folk ; only the ships on the water without life. Yet, there lay the defenders of our land ; some of the greatest. One word from a supreme voice, and in the twinkling of an eye the diamond ships would have become invisible, the guns would have roared and screamed with death, the lifeless ships would have lived with men. May they long count their twos and threes to their neighbours' ones ! May Britain ever place gold on a lower footing than her country : the ethics of peace.

THE DAY BREAKS

CHAPTER XX

THE DAY BREAKS

In September David was advised to go to Millbank Military Hospital for further advice. He saw Sir James F. Goodheart who had also seen him at Osborne, and Sir Kingston Fowler ; and it was here, under the watchful care of Colonel Harrison and Major Harrison and his kind nurses, that David was to spend the last weeks of his life ; for, notwithstanding all skill and careful nursing, the bright life was ebbing. South Africa and Somaliland had taken their toll all too surely.

" It is wonderful, mother," he said one day in the hospital, " that I have suffered so little pain in my life until now. Other poor fellows have suffered terribly."

Yet at this time the only thing to alleviate his pain was morphia. No wonder that after his death letters came from soldiers telling of his bravery One letter from Colonel W. E. Gordon, V.C., said, " He was one of the two bravest men I have ever known."

David's last weeks were kept bright by the visits of his friends and his brother-officers from

Aldershot. General Spens, to whom David had been A.D.C. in South Africa—" My General," as he called him—was then living in London, and came often to see him with his wife. Also came day after day his brother-officers from Aldershot, with his Commanding Officer, the Hon. Frederick Gordon ; also Colonel W. E. Gordon, who was Adjutant when he joined his regiment in South Africa nine years before, and Captain Meiklejohn. A friend very eagerly welcomed was one of his comrades in Somaliland, Captain Farquhar, who came almost every day, and whose wife, Lady Evelyn Farquhar, once gave David great pleasure by bringing their little children to see him ; he always loved children. His room was a garden with flowers and fruit, tokens of the love he had inspired.

But, more than to all, perhaps, do those who are left feel the debt they owe to one who never knew David until he came to see him at this time, and yet who was to be the means of sanctifying these last weeks with memories too sacred to detail. To the Reverend Canon H. Hensley Henson, who, while of another Church, found a link of kinship with this young soldier which brought him every morning for many weeks to his side, we owe David's peaceful confidence in that which the Day might bring to him.

The day was All-Hallows' Eve ; for on that day as a grey morning was trembling in the dawn did David pass to his rest.

The Day Breaks

The life, to our human eyes so short, was now completed ; for in the words of One Who saw further than we may see, " When the corn is ripe immediately He putteth in the sickle."

LAID TO REST

CHAPTER XXI

LAID TO REST

THE Gordon Highlanders desired to bury their comrade with full military honours. This was only possible if David should rest near Aldershot. After much thought, Brookwood was chosen. On Thursday, November 4th, a service was held in the chapel, conducted by Canon Hensley Henson and the Reverend Mr. Cooper, the Presbyterian chaplain.

The chapel was filled with David's friends, and as the sun pierced through the windows, brightening the uniforms of the soldiers who were mourning their comrade, the beautiful words of the service, the prayers, the hymns, echoed through the nave.

At Brookwood the Gordon Highlanders, under the command of Colonel the Hon. Frederick Gordon, lined the platform. Lieutenant-General Grierson, with officers from other regiments, stood beside them. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack, and on it rested David's plaid, feather bonnet, claymore and medals. It was borne on a gun carriage to the chapel where there was a short service.

The air was clear, the sky was blue, the freshness of an exquisite autumn day was everywhere, as David

passed through the ranks of his regiment for the last time. The Gordon Highlanders with bent heads lined the way, and the plaint of the beloved Scottish music rose on the still air till the Last Post sounded. His father, General Spens, and his brother-officers laid him to rest amidst the trees. The last loving touch came as the wreaths and crosses were laid reverently above him; one with the words "To our Beloved Captain."

LETTERS FROM KING EDWARD

CHAPTER XXII

LETTERS FROM KING EDWARD

BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

28/10/09.

DEAR SIR,

I am commanded by the King to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st inst., and to tell you that His Majesty regrets to hear that your son, whom he saw at Osborne, has since been so seriously ill.

The King hopes that since he has been moved to Queen Alexandra Military Hospital he may have improved somewhat, but His Majesty wishes me to say that he would like to hear how he progresses, and hopes you may be able to give a better account of his condition.

Yours very truly,

F. E. G. PONSONBY.

2/11/09.

DEAR SIR,

The King received the sad news of the death of your son, Captain D. S. Miller, of the Gordon

Highlanders, and desires me to express his sincere sympathy with you and your family in the loss you have sustained.

Yours very truly,

F. E. G. PONSONBY

David Miller, Esq.

David had the happiness to know of the first letter of King Edward the day before he died. It gave him perhaps the last pleasure of his earthly life.

THE DEAREST LEGACY

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DEAREST LEGACY

It was in Aberdeen that David and Buffles said good-bye.

If David could have foreseen that which the years would bring when he slipped the little black puppy into his pocket that October day on the South African veldt it would have been his great comfort to know what this dog would mean to those who would be left behind him. Buffles was always gentle, but the years had left him quieter than of old, and he clung to those who loved him with a faithfulness that was intense. The phrase "Buffles is going," was ever his favourite. To go for a walk and to come in and have all his exploits told to those who had not gone too—that was Buffles' chief joy in these latter years of his life. His walks and his stories! He would sit between the one who told and the one who listened and look up into the faces with his speaking eyes and wag his tail: it was as if he understood each word. He lived until March 28th, 1912, when he would be about ten and a half years old. One night he took ill suddenly and died within twenty-four hours.

A Captain to the Gordons

He lies buried in a garden by the kind permission of the owner until such time as arrangement may be made to place him nearer the last resting-place of his best-beloved friend.

A LAST WORD

CHAPTER XXIV

A LAST WORD

DAVID'S life ended in the flush of his manhood and of his career; a life filled with strenuous work and unselfish devotion to duty. One little incident will tell the keynote of his life. In Somaliland he was offered a tempting position on the staff of Colonel K——, but he thought it his duty to stick to the Somalis whom he had trained as mounted infantry, and who understood him. In speaking of this at home his mother said :—

"What a pity! It would have been so good for your career."

He smiled. "But, mother," he said, "I have a character first, and then a career."

That was David. He had moral courage; if possible, some thought, to a fault. His indignation aroused his voice was heard at all hazards to himself.

Religion was one of the silences of David's life, yet he never hesitated to speak of it to those who broached the subject. Once, at Osborne, one spoke to him about the so-called modern tendency towards atheism.

"The man who does not believe in God," said David, "is a fool."

He objected to the doing of any avoidable work on Sunday whether by man or beast. His views were broad, but they were strict, for his breadth never lost sight of the limit beyond which breadth becomes chaos.

His ideas about literature crystallized at this time into the same defined breadth. He had by no means unbounded admiration for all realists. That literature was the servant of truth he would have been the first to assert; but, to David, in the heart of truth lay the germ of goodness ultimately triumphant, and for the pen that suggested otherwise he had nothing but condemnation.

Not that he believed in slurring over evil: he deplored that sentimentality which would blur the laws of right and wrong. But it was his hope that punishment belonged to this world, and that forgiveness followed hereafter. "Never judge!" he would warn time and again. Anything approaching revenge was abhorrent to him. How could one tell to what burden of pain one might be adding a paltry last straw?

David's fund of stories was endless. He was quick to see humour and pathos, and he never slurred the human touch. Perhaps it was this that drew him so strongly to Dickens from his school-days and throughout his manhood. It was in Somaliland that he read Stevenson's *Virginibus Puerisque* for the first time—it so happened that he had never read it in his boyhood—and it was hence-

forth one of his favourite books. Its savour to him, doubtless, would be commingled with the memory of Somali camp fires and two staunch friends.

He was markedly a defender of the weak, and a comrade of the strong. The action in which he killed eight men he never spoke about except in short answers to queries. He hated to kill; especially "these poor Somalis." Since his death one of the officers who relieved him just in time said :—

"Miller was firing his revolver, his leg pinned under his horse, with dead men scattered about, and when we came up he pitched the revolver after the flying Somalis."

David considered the most striking thing in his soldier-life was his being the Commander of the Advance, or Rear-Guard, as the General thought advisable, on the twenty-nine days' and nights' march across the Somaliland Desert known as the Haud, from Galadi to Bohotle and on to Burao. His duty was to lead his handful of Mounted Infantry (composed entirely of Somalis) six to eight miles to the rear or in front of the advancing column, his position in regard to it depending on the report of the direction in which the Mullah was marching. Once during the day he reported himself to the column, and received instructions. The column marched, therefore, in security. The march began a few weeks after the annihilation of Colonel Plunket's force, when at each moment the Mullah was expected

to attack in overwhelming numbers. It was a great trust this that was reposed in one officer.

General Manning's dispatch regarding David at the end of the war ran :—

" Lieutenant D. S. Miller, Gordon Highlanders.

" This officer commanded a section of the Somali Mounted Infantry, and has on several occasions been brought to my notice for good service in the field."

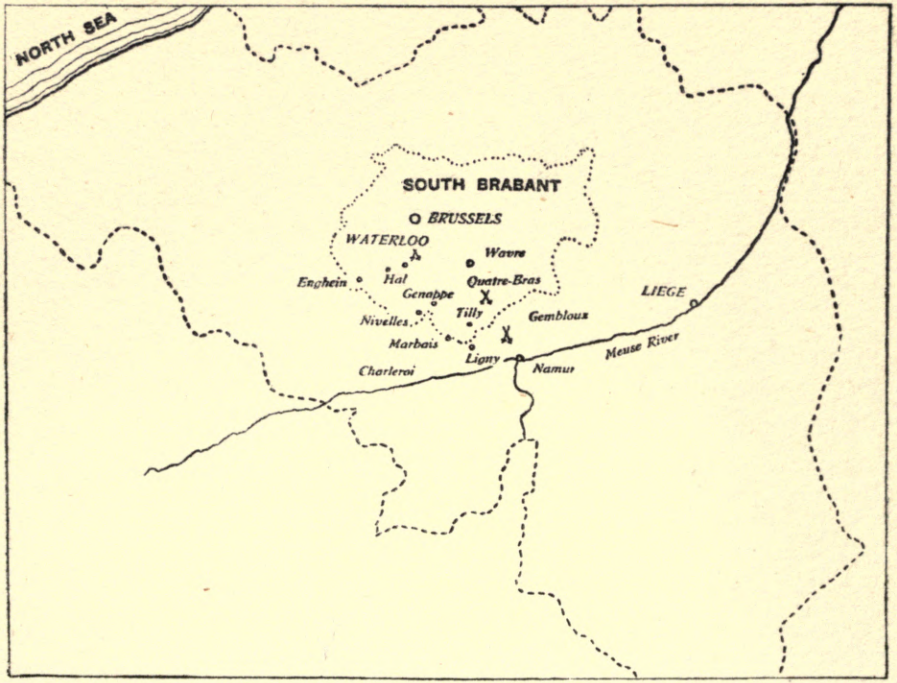
For his services in South Africa David obtained the Queen's medal with three clasps and the King's medal with two clasps.

For his services in Somaliland he obtained the medal with clasps.

General Spens told David's people, as he went down with them to Brookwood Cemetery on the day on which we laid David to rest, that he had recommended him for the Victoria Cross.

But David's honours lie, where honour must ever lie, in the fact that he was found worthy of trust in great stress and not found wanting.

TWO ESSAYS
By CAPTAIN MILLER



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE "CRITICISM OF NAPOLEON'S ACTION AFTER LIGNY."

CRITICISM OF NAPOLEON'S ACTION AFTER LIGNY

BEFORE attempting to criticise the action of Napoleon after the battle of Ligny, it will be convenient to explain the strategical situation in which he found himself on the morning of June 17th.

Position of the Allies :—

The Allies' Main Body on the morning of the 17th was collecting at Quatre Bras, and by 10 a.m. was commencing its retreat towards Waterloo in good order.

Chassé's and Clinton's divisions with part of Colville's were marching direct from Nivelles on the same point. The Dutch-Belgians were moving from Enghien on Hal west of Waterloo to cover Brussels on that side.

Position of the Prussians :—

On the morning of the 17th, the Prussian Army was in full retreat towards Wavre. The retreat was ordered by Gneisenau, who took over command after Blücher was wounded. His orders directed the march on Wavre to start at dawn. (He at that

time did not know that Major Winterfeldt had failed to communicate with the Duke.)

Zieten marched by Tilly, Gentimmes, and Mont St. Guibert, followed by Pirch, Thielmann marched by Gembloux, and Bülow by Walhain and Cuheaux to Dion; he went south-east of Wavre.

Position of the French Army :—

On the morning of the 17th the main French Army was lying around Ligny, a corps of infantry and the guard at Marbais. Ney was lying before Quatre Bras.

The above indicates shortly the position of the opposing forces, and the exact position can be easily seen by reference to the map.

Criticism.

There can be no doubt that Napoleon's object at this juncture was to attack the Allies with an overwhelming force at Quatre Bras, and drive them, a beaten force, back on their base, and at the same time to keep a containing force between himself and the Prussians, to prevent any possibility of juncture between these two armies. This plan certainly appears the best he could have adopted, but his chances of success were completely nullified by his dilatoriness in moving. A large portion of his army was comparatively fresh, namely, the 6th Corps, the Guard and a large proportion of the cavalry, notably the light cavalry and the cavalry

under Kellerman. These troops could perfectly well have moved against the allies at dawn.

Everything seemed to favour and indicate immediate and vigorous action. The weather was propitious, and, as already stated, the troops were fresh. Napoleon could by no means afford to disregard the beaten Prussians, as, owing mainly to the confusion of the Comte d'Erlon, and the misunderstanding on the part of Ney, the left wing of the French army had been unable to act decisively at Ligny, and in consequence they (the Prussians) had not suffered so severely as would otherwise have been the case.

It was essential that Napoleon should make up for this want of complete victory by acting on the 17th with the greatest promptitude and energy. His enemies were under his hand. The Prussians were in full retreat; the Allies were lying at Quatre Bras, attempting a tardy concentration before morning; Napoleon's own troops were fresh and flushed with victory.

Ney was threatening the front of the Allies' position at Quatre Bras, and a crushing blow could have been dealt on the left flank of the Allies by the Namur-Quatre Bras road. By acting as indicated above Napoleon could have nothing to lose and everything to gain. A battle with the English must have resulted in victory to the French. The Allies would have been forced back northwards and westwards, a beaten force. The Prussians, hearing of this, in all probability would have given up any

idea of co-operation, and retired eastwards on their base. Thus complete victory would have rested with the French. Moving on Interior Lines they would have successfully frustrated their opponents' line, and beaten the Allies and Prussians in detail.

As a matter of fact, Napoleon delayed his advance against the Allies till so late in the day that they were in full and orderly retreat, and close to their position at Waterloo, before the French came in touch with them,—and consequently, instead of a decisive battle taking place, the only result of the French advance was a slight cavalry skirmish near Genappe. Hence, through his inexplicable slowness of movement, Napoleon failed utterly to in any way disturb the Allies on June 17th. This was his first great mistake on that day.

Again it was essential to Napoleon's strategical Plan of Penetration that close touch should be kept with the beaten army, and that it should be forced back down its lines of communication, thus causing it to diverge from the second army of the Allies, and that at all costs a sufficient containing force should be kept between the French army and the Prussians to prevent their further action until the defeat of Wellington, and to prevent any possibility of the two armies, English and Prussians, joining forces—more especially on the battlefield. No one knew better than Napoleon how to work successfully on interior lines. No one knew better

than Napoleon the urgent necessity of keeping close touch with the beaten army, and the necessity of a reliable containing force. His dilatory action, therefore, in the pursuit of the Prussians, is the more inexplicable. The immediate result of this unfortunate delay was the complete impotence of Grouchy, who was despatched late on the afternoon of the 17th, with Vandamme's and Gerard's Corps, plus a division of the 6th Corps and cavalry, in the direction of Gembloux. Grouchy naturally supposed that the beaten Prussian army had retired down the lines of communication towards Liège, and based his orders for the pursuit on this assumption. Consequently, he wandered hopelessly about looking for an army which was retiring on Wavre. He was unable to find any signs of the whereabouts of the main Prussian army, was absolutely useless as a containing force, and his whole force was lost to the French fighting line.

Napoleon must necessarily have known that to despatch a pursuing force so long after the retreat of the opposing army had commenced was worse than useless. Therefore, it would appear that had Napoleon, recognising his mistake in the matter of delay in pursuit, retained Grouchy with the main army he could at least have made certain of his assistance in his fighting line.

This was Napoleon's second mistake, and the final result of it was the total defeat of the French army at Waterloo, inasmuch as at that action

Napoleon was compelled to fight without Grouchy's force, and as Grouchy had failed to locate or contain the Prussians, Blücher was able to attack the French right with three corps while they were yet hotly engaged with Wellington, thus causing their total destruction and subsequent disastrous retreat.

There is no reasonable doubt that Napoleon wasted his time and opportunities on June 17th. That this man, so great a military genius, should have acted thus is quite extraordinary, and we naturally look for some reason or explanation. Apparently nothing much can be said by way of excuse.

Various excuses are made for Napoleon's want of activity on June 17th by various authors. The best allusion appears to me to be the one made by Jomini :—

" Undoubtedly the Emperor had powerful motives for resigning himself to such inactivity ; but these motives have never reached us."

However, it is as well to state a few reasons by way of excuse for Napoleon on this occasion. At this time nearly all writers agree that Napoleon was unfit. He was ill. Again, he was grievously disappointed by receiving no news from Ney. Marshal Soult at the same time seems to have failed his chief. He was Napoleon's chief staff officer, and on the morning of the 17th should have had complete information ready for the Emperor. He had not such information, and consequently Napoleon

remained in ignorance of what had taken place at Quatre Bras.

Again, Napoleon never supposed for a moment that Blücher had retired towards Wavre. The natural assumption was that the Prussians had retired on Namur and Liège, but this scarcely excuses the fact that no reconnaissance was made in the direction of Tilly. Cavalry in the French army was plentiful and fresh, and this omission seems quite unpardonable.

It is possible to go on arguing and re-arguing about Napoleon's conduct on this occasion, but it appears very unsatisfactory, and I think we must be content with Jomini's excellent criticism, already quoted here.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF GRANT'S OPERATIONS IN VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND, OF JUNE, 1864

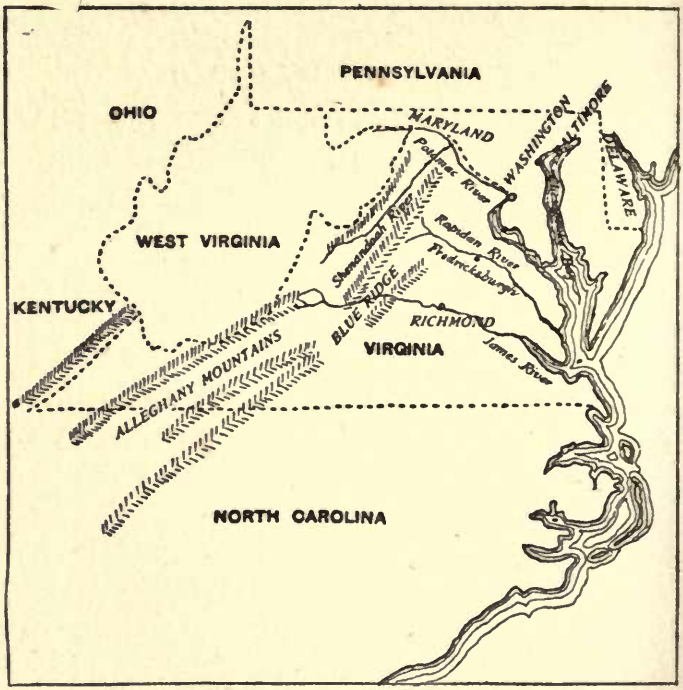
AND

AN ESSAY ON THE INFLUENCE ON THESE OPERATIONS OF THE MOVEMENTS ON THE JAMES RIVER AND IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY DURING THE SAME PERIOD

Books of Reference:

"The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865." By A. A. Humphreys, Chief of Staff Army of the Potomac.

"A History of the Civil War in the United States, 1861-5. Wood and Edwards.



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE "GRANT'S OPERATIONS IN VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND, *June*, 1864."

GRANT'S OPERATIONS
IN
VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND
June, 1864

INTRODUCTORY

BEFORE summarising the operations of Grant in Virginia in June, 1864, and discussing the co-operation of the army of the Shenandoah and the army of the James River with the Army of the Potomac at that period of the Civil War, it will be necessary to briefly state the strength and composition of the opposing armies, with their position at the commencement of the operations in May, 1864, and the objectives of the directing leaders. (Reference Map: Anderson's " General Map of Virginia.")

THEATRE OF OPERATIONS

THE Theatre of Operations lay in Virginia and West Virginia, and borders of Maryland, embracing the Valley of the Shenandoah, and the plain east of Blue Ridge.

Main Rivers.—Rapidan, North Anna, South Anna, Pamunkey and James.

Railways.—(1) "Baltimore and Ohio," connecting Washington with the West. (2) "Orange and Alexandria," running south-west from Washington. (3) "Richmond Railways," to Fredericksburg—northwards to Gordonsville, and westwards to Weldon, Danville and Lynchburg.

The Shenandoah Valley was of great importance to the Confederates, both as a means of supply, and a means of aiming blows at Washington, the Federal Capital.

COMPOSITION AND STRENGTH OF THE OPPOSING ARMIES

Federals

Commander in Chief—Lieut.-Gen. Grant.

Armies

(1) Army of the Potomac under General Meade, including :—

Second Corps (Hancock), 54 Guns.
Fifth Corps (Warren), 48 Guns.
Sixth Corps (Wright), 48 Guns.
Ninth Corps (Burnside), 42 Guns.
Cavalry (Sheridan), 32 Guns.
Artillery Reserve (Hunt), 92 Guns.

Each corps, roughly, 24,000 men. Total, 92,000 infantry ; 12,000 cavalry ; 316 guns.

(2) Army of the Shenandoah, and Army of West Virginia (Sigel, Hunter, Crook and Averell) :—

Total, 24,000 men ; 64 guns.

(3) Army of the James—under General Butler, including :—

Tenth Corps (Gillmore).

Eighteenth Corps (Smith).

Total, 32,000 infantry ; 3,000 cavalry ; 86 guns.

(4) Reserves at Washington, 40,000 men.

Grand Total of Federal Forces in Theatre of Operations :—205,000 men, 468 guns.

CONFEDERATES

Commander-in-Chief — President Davis who directed the strategical movements.

Armies

(1) Army of Northern Virginia, under General Lee, including :—

First Corps (Anderson), 54 guns.

Second Corps (Early), 70 guns.

Third Corps (Hill), 80 guns.

Cavalry (Stuart), 20 guns.

Each Corps averaging 16,000 men. Total, 62,000 men and 224 guns.

(2) Army of the Shenandoah Valley under Breckinridge :—

Total, 9,000 men ; 24 guns.

(3) Army of Beauregard. 22,000 infantry ; 2,000 cavalry ; 50 guns.

Grand Total of Confederate Forces in Theatre of Operations, 90,000 men ; 298 guns.

N.B.—Divisions numbered about 5,000 to 8,000; Brigades, 1,500 to 3,000.

These numbers are probably approximate. (Reference: Humphrey's, Anderson and Edwards.)

POSITION OF OPPOSING ARMIES IN MAY, 1864

(Commencement of these Operations)

Federals

(*a*) Sigel with the army of the Shenandoah in the valley.

(*b*) Grant and Meade with the army of the Potomac along the Orange Railway.

(*c*) Butler with the army of the James on the River James.

Confederates

(*a*) Lee with the army of Northern Virginia lying behind the Rapidan river, north-east of Orange Court House.

(*b*) Breckinridge with the army of the Shenandoah in the valley.

(*c*) Beauregard at Petersburg.

Objectives

The Federal General, who was acting on the offensive, had three objectives :—

1. To destroy the Confederate field armies.
2. To occupy Richmond.
3. To destroy the Confederate railways.

N.B.—His strategical plans will be found discussed at the end of the Essay.

The Confederate General's object was to gain time, trusting to a foreign intervention, which never came. This was his only possible chance. He was hopelessly

outnumbered, and could expect no reinforcements to replace casualties. His immediate object was to cover Richmond.

Grant's Operations

Grant operated from May 1st to the middle of June by a series of flank movements, altogether nine in number—namely :—

1. Over the Rapidan, May 4–6, resulting in the Battle of the Wilderness, May 5–7.
2. To Spottsylvania, May 7–8, resulting in the Battle of Spottsylvania, Court House, May 8–9.
3. Hancock's move, night of May 11–12.
4. Warren's move, May 13.
5. Grant's move, May 18.
6. Grant's move to the North Anna, May 20.
7. Grant's move down the Pamunkey, May 26.

Thus we come to the period for which the summary is required—namely, June, 1864.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF GRANT'S OPERATIONS OF JUNE, 1864

(Position on May 31st, 1864)

Federals

Grant advancing on Cold Harbour with the army of the Potomac, Hunter, Sigel, Crook, and Averell—in the Shenandoah valley. Butler bottled up near City Point, and quite useless. (Reference: "Essay on Army of the James.")

Confederates

Lee with the army of Northern Virginia lay behind the Totopotomy River, covering the approach to Richmond by Shady Grove Church Road, and the Mechanicsville Turnpike.

Beauregard was at Petersburg, and Jones in the Shenandoah valley.

Grant's immediate plan of operations at this date was to continue his movement by his left towards the Chickahominy, in order to turn the Confederate right flank before it had entrenched.

SUMMARY

May 31st, 1864

The Federal cavalry under Sheridan defeated the Confederate cavalry under Fitzhugh-Lee, and occupied Cold Harbour.

On June 1st and 2nd Grant, with the army of the Potomac, commenced his eighth flank march, having opposed to him the army of Northern Virginia under Lee.

June 1st

The Second, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth and Eighteenth Corps were engaged, and opposed to them were the Confederate forces under Heth, Early, Anderson, Hoke, Breckinridge and Hill, with Lee commanding in chief.

The action of June 1st commenced with an attack

on Anderson and Hoke by the Eighteenth and Sixth Corps. This attack was successful. Lee replied by attacking the Second, Fifth, and Ninth Corps with Hill, Breckinridge and Early.

June 2nd

Heth and Early attacked the right flank of the Federal army and were repulsed by the Ninth Corps, on the night of the 2nd. The army of the Potomac lay with its right in Bethesda Church, and its left in the Chickahominy River.

On this date Hunter defeated the Confederates under Jones at Piedmont in the Shenandoah valley.

June 3rd

Sheridan crossed the Chickahominy with the Federal cavalry.

BATTLE OF COLD HARBOUR

The action commenced at 4.30 a.m. with an attack on the main Confederate position by the Second, Sixth, and Eighteenth Corps. This attack was unsuccessful. The Fifth and Ninth Corps also attacked the Confederate right; only partially successful. General Grant then suspended operations.

June 4th—12th

The opposing armies lay facing each other from the 4th to the 12th. There was continual skir-

mishing and gun fire ; and the Federal troops suffered severely both from defective commissariat and bad water. Fever was prevalent.

June 7th

On this date Sheridan, with two divisions of cavalry, was sent on a raid west to Charlottesville, with the object of destroying the Central Railway, and of meeting and co-operating with Hunter.

June 9th

Butler on this date moved against Petersburg ; unsuccessful (see Essay).

June 11th

On June 11th Sheridan fought the action of Trevylian Station, driving the Confederate cavalry under Hampton and Fitzhugh-Lee back on Gordonsville.

June 12th

On this date the army of the Potomac commenced its ninth flank march, and crossed the Chickahominy River and the James River. The passage of the James was covered by Admiral Lee with the Federal Fleet. The whole of the army of the Potomac had crossed by June 16th to the right bank.

Losses from May 27th to June 12th—Federals, 17,000 ; Confederates, 5,000.

June 16th.

The Confederate General seems to have been unaware of this movement, and did not give credence to the report till June 17th.

PETERSBURG

June 15th

On June 15th Grant commenced his attack on the Petersburg entrenchments, directing his assaults on the eastern front.

On this date Smith, with 10,000 of his own men and 2,400 of Kautz cavalry (with 3,700 negroes), attacked the entrenchments near City Point Railway. He captured seven Redans and 16 guns.

Note.—Lee had sent Hoke's division to reinforce Petersburg, and it arrived on this date.

June 16th

On June 16th the Fifth and Ninth Corps arrived in front of Petersburg, and on this date the garrison was reinforced by two divisions.

The Federals again attacked and took Redans 12, 13, 14 and 4.

June 17th

On June 17th Shand House was carried, and assaults made on Hanover Creek.

On this date Hunter commenced his assault on Lynchburg with the army of the Shenandoah (see Essay).

June 18th

Losses, June 15th to 18th—Federals, 10,000; Confederates, Unknown.

On June 18th assaults were made by Meade, near Han House, and by the Fifth and Ninth Corps to the south.

Grant now decided to invest Petersburg by entrenchments.

On this date Hunter renewed his assaults on Lynchburg, and on 19th retired, abandoning the Shenandoah Valley (see Essay).

June 21st

On June 21st the Federal forces on the east of Petersburg lay from the north—Eighteenth Corps, Ninth Corps, Fifth Corps, Second Corps, Sixth Corps. Grant's object at this date was to secure the Weldon and Lynchburg Railways.

June 22nd—June 29th

On June 22nd while the Second and Sixth Corps were making a movement to the west, they left a gap. Hill interfered and inflicted great loss.

On this date what is known as Wilson's Raid commenced. Wilson and Kautz, with some 6,000 men, marched on Burkesville, and then, turning south, broke the Danville Railway. They were intercepted at Ream's Station on the Weldon Railway on the 29th by Hampton and Fitzhugh-Lee. Wilson was compelled to destroy his transport and fled, pursued

by Hampton. He then turned east and finally north, rejoining the main army.

July 2nd

Kautz fled east with the loss of all his guns, and also finally rejoined the main army—on July 2nd.

This raid cost the Federals 1,500 men and 12 guns.

This finishes Grant's Operations up to the end of June, 1864.

Federal losses since May 1st, 65,000.
Confederates, probably 30,000 *to* 40,000.

MOVEMENTS OF THE ARMY OF THE SHENANDOAH (MAY AND JUNE, 1864), SHOWING THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC UNDER GRANT

THE Shenandoah Valley formed a part of what was known as the department of West Virginia.

In the spring of 1864, General Sigel was in command of this department, with a force of some 6,500 men, plus the army of West Virginia under Crook and Averell.

To understand the reasons for the Operations in the Valley and their bearing on the movements of Grant and his army of the Potomac, it is necessary to briefly state the functions of the commander of the department.

Shortly, then, Grant's plan designed that the troops in this department should cover the Baltimore-Ohio Railroad, the great line of communication between Washington and the West, and also should act offensively against the Virginia Central Railway, passing through Staunton, and against the Virginia and Tennessee Railway, passing through Lynchburg.

Accordingly, early in May, 1864, Averell, with two brigades of cavalry, advanced on Saltville with the view of destroying the bridge over the New River at New Bern, on the Virginia and Tennessee Railway. He failed in his object, and was driven back with loss. Crook, however, was successful where Averell had failed, and burned the bridge. General Sigel meanwhile advanced up the Valley, and on May 14th, coming in contact with Breckinridge's Corps, near Newmarket, sustained a severe defeat. Shortly after this he was superseded by Hunter, and we now come to the period required, namely, the end of May, 1864, to end of June, 1864.

It is well to note at this point that Sigel's defeat caused General Lee to withdraw Breckinridge's Corps from the Valley and place it on the line of the North Anna River, thus reinforcing his army in front of Grant by one corps. Indeed, it will be noticed that the influence of the Federal army of the Shenandoah was at various intervals to cause Lee to detach troops, thus relieving the pressure in front

of Grant—a fact which it is an object of this Essay to point out.

Hunter was now in supreme command in the Valley, and advanced on May 26th from Cedar Creek, with a force of 8,500 men and 21 guns.

His object was to carry out his orders, namely to march on Staunton and there effect a junction with Crook and Averell, with the ultimate object of advancing on Charlottesville and Lynchburg.

On June 2nd he moved south-east with the object of outflanking Imboden's cavalry. On June 5th he came in contact with the Confederate main body at Piedmont, which he completely routed, capturing 3 guns and 1,500 prisoners. The Confederate General, Jones, was killed. Hunter then joined hands with Crook and Averell and occupied Staunton. He was thus reinforced by 10,000 men and two batteries. On June 10th, Hunter moved towards Lynchburg with 18,000 men and 30 guns.

General Grant intended that he should march by way of Charlottesville, but Hunter, influenced by the fact that a Confederate force held Rockfish Gap, moved by Lexington. This change of route proved a fatal mistake, as we shall see.

Hunter arrived at Lexington on June 11th, and he halted there till the 13th (another mistake), waiting for his cavalry, which had been sent to destroy the Charlottesville and Lynchburg Railway. In consequence of this Breckinridge and Early, who

had been despatched by Lee to the Valley, had time to reach Lynchburg and all hope of capturing that town was lost to the Federal army.

Note again at this point the operations of the army of the Shenandoah causing Lee to detach two Corps from his army in front of Grant. Hunter advanced upon Lynchburg by the Peaks of Otter.

On the 17th he carried a line of Confederate entrenchments five miles outside the city.

On the 18th he attacked vigorously, driving back Early's infantry. Hunter, however, now perceived that he was outnumbered and decided on retreat. And now it became apparent what a fatal mistake had been made in choosing the Lexington Route.

In the first place, Sheridan, who had been despatched by Grant to meet and co-operate with Hunter, finding that Hunter was advancing by Lexington, instead of attempting to co-operate, very wisely retired, whereby Hunter lost the assistance of two divisions of Cavalry.

Now came the question of the Line of Retreat.

The natural route was practically impossible, as Early could move his troops by rail and act offensively through the Rockfish Gap, against the Federals as they retired.

There was then another road west of the Shenandoah Valley, passing through the Valley of the south branch of the Potomac, and coming out at Cumberland on the Baltimore-Ohio Railway. Here, however, there was the possibility of Early cutting

the line of retreat, by moving by Staunton and Harrisonburg; also there was great difficulty of supply.

Hunter, therefore, abandoned this idea.

There now remained only one route, namely, northwards into the Kanawha Valley. This abandoned the Shenadoah Valley to Early, but Hunter had no choice. He was running short of supplies of both food and ammunition, and he was 200 miles from his base. Forced marches were made, and finally, on June 27th, Hunter arrived near Gauley Bridge, where supplies were awaiting him, and went into camp. His troops were so exhausted by privation that it was found impossible to use them for the defence of Washington.

Early, on Hunter's evacuation of the Valley, marched straight for the Potomac, reaching Winchester on July 2nd; but further operations go beyond the limit of this Essay.

The result of Hunter's expedition had been to compel Lee to greatly weaken his army of Northern Virginia in front of Grant—a result Grant had foreseen. By his operations in the Shenandoah, and on the James River, Grant clearly perceived that he must compel Lee to detach troops from his main army.

He was eminently successful with the army of the Shenandoah in attaining this object, and would have been still more so with the army of the James, had it not been for the incapacity of Butler.

MOVEMENTS OF THE ARMY OF THE JAMES RIVER (MAY AND JUNE, 1864), AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE MOVEMENTS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC UNDER GRANT

IT will be necessary to discuss the operations of this army in May, 1864, as well as June, as it was the operations of May which influenced Grant's movements both in May and June.

In making his original strategical plan for the operations of the summer of 1864, General Grant decided on a co-operative movement by the Army of the James under Butler.

Butler had under his command two Corps, with Generals Gillmore and Smith, in all about 36,000 men. Of these a small portion were coloured troops.

In May Butler concentrated at Bermuda Hundred Neck, and subsequently received orders to move on Richmond, the Confederate capital, and invest that city. He was further ordered to establish his left flank on the River above Richmond, and thus General Grant hoped he might effect a junction with the army of the Potomac.

It is interesting to note at this point that a historian states that " unfortunately for the success of the Federal plans, Butler was perhaps the most incapable officer still retained in high command," and another historian argues that the orders given to Butler were vague, if not contradictory, and that throughout the operations his action was to depend on Grants'

movements, and as events turned out very differently to what Grant expected on the north side of Richmond, it is not surprising that Butler failed also on the south side. Again, we find one historian stating definitely that Butler had no orders with regard to Petersburg, but that the only orders he received were to move on Richmond, and on the other hand another historian stating just as definitely that Butler received orders to capture Petersburg, secure the Petersburg-Weldon Railway, and invest Richmond. It therefore appears well-nigh impossible to discover what orders this unfortunate officer did receive. However this may be, Butler failed very signally, as we shall see.

Early in May Butler had a splendid chance of capturing Petersburg, securing the Petersburg-Weldon Railway, and investing Richmond on the south side of the James River. This would have necessitated the recall of Lee's army of Northern Virginia, thus freeing Grant's hand with the army of the Potomac. Had Lee's army not been recalled the Confederate capital must have been abandoned. This course of action was strongly urged on Butler by his Corps Commanders.

Butler completely outnumbered Beauregard, the Confederate General, who had probably not more than 6,000 men, besides his siege artillery, under his command. It is true he had reinforcements coming up from the south, but Butler had broken up the Petersburg-Weldon Railway at various points, thus

seriously retarding Beauregard's concentration. Butler, with this opportunity staring him in the face, remained inactive, with the result that the Confederate General had time to bring up his reinforcements to Richmond and Petersburg, and then assume the offensive, having concentrated a force equal to Butler's own.

On May 16th the action of Drury's Bluff was fought. Butler was defeated and withdrew to Burnside Hundred, whence he was followed by Beauregard, who then extended himself in front of the Federal army. The result of this is well described by Edmonds. He says—" The army of the James was thus confined in a bottle, of which Beauregard held the cork."

Thus it will be seen how the inactivity of the army of the James seriously hindered the fulfilment of Grant's plans. Further, the immediate effect was to strengthen the army of Northern Virginia, for Beauregard, having now nothing to fear from the Federal army, was able to send two Divisions and one Brigade to reinforce Lee.

When General Grant was informed of Butler's failure to co-operate, and his helpless condition with regard to Petersburg, he ordered him to send as many men as he could spare to White House, on the Pamunkey River—in order to operate in junction with the army of the Potomac. Butler accordingly dispatched Smith with 16,000 men to the required place.

On June 9th he made a feeble move against Petersburg, sending a small force under Gillmore to the south bank of the Appomattox.

Gillmore made an effort, but, finding the works round Petersburg too strong, he very wisely retired.

This really ends any independent action of the army of the James—as by June 16th the army of the Potomac had crossed the river.

It will be seen that although Butler could have been of the very greatest use to General Grant by successful co-operation, he let his opportunities slip by, and, through his dilatoriness, procrastination and want of initiative, got himself securely bottled up, and set free a great portion of Beauregard's army to go to the assistance of General Lee.

It is held by some historians and strategists that the whole operations of the army of the James, and the army of the Shenandoah, were a strategical error, inasmuch as that in order to detain 18,000 men Grant himself was compelled to detach 40,000 men. This view is held by a great authority on this period—Vaughan-Sawyer. At the first glance, and according to general strategical principles, this view appears to be correct. It must be remembered, however, that the Federal General was peculiarly situated, inasmuch as he greatly outnumbered his enemy, and while his casualties were made good by reinforcements, the Confederates had no such reinforcements to hope for.

It would appear, therefore, that the loss of 40,000 men to Grant was not nearly so serious as the loss of 18,000 men to Lee. Therefore, I disagree with Vaughan-Sawyer on this point, and to me Grant's strategy appears sound—especially as the junction at one place of the army of the James, the army of the Shenandoah, and the army of the Potomac would have made Grant's train very unwieldy.

GRANT'S STRATEGICAL PLAN OF OPERATIONS, MAY-JUNE, 1864

In May, 1864, in making out his strategical plans General Grant had to decide whether it would be more advantageous to move against the Confederate forces by sea, *i.e.*, transport the army of the Potomac by sea to the neighbourhood of Richmond, or operate against General Lee and the army of Northern Virginia by land.

It was quite a simple matter to transport the army by sea. The Federals had command of the sea, and from that fact Grant had a great strategical advantage over his opponent. He had, it will be seen, the advantage of a Re-entrant, and a very extended Base, which he used to good purpose, constantly being able to shift his base, and consequently being able to frequently change his Line of Operations.

The transportation of the army of the Potomac by sea meant, however, leaving the army of Northern

Virginia under Lee free to move on Washington, and, of this opportunity Grant considered it highly probable Lee would at once take advantage. Further, Grant considered that his chief objective should be Lee and the army of Northern Virginia, the main Confederate field army.

The destruction of this army and its renowned leader meant the death-blow to the southern Confederacy. The fall of Richmond would be disastrous, but not fatal. Grant, therefore, decided on an advance by land with his main objective Lee, and the army of Northern Virginia—with the army of the Shenandoah co-operating in the north and the army of the James co-operating in the south. Hence his famous order to General Meade—

" Wherever Lee goes, there you will go too."

In this decision he was strongly supported by President Lincoln.

Having decided on an advance by land, Grant had now to consider whether the advance should be directed against the right or left flank of the Confederates. If he moved against the left flank he would be moving through a country favourable to offensive operations, and he would threaten the Confederate Line of Communication between Richmond and the Shenandoah Valley—one of their great arteries for supply.

Grant, however, rejected this course for the following reasons. First, it meant the detachment of a large number of troops from the protection of the

Orange and Alexandria Railway; and, secondly, it meant that the movements would be observed for forty miles by the Confederate posts on South-west Mountain; thus giving Lee sufficient warning to enable him to throw up a strongly entrenched position on the mountain which would cover the line of approach to Gordonsville.

There remained, then, the advance against the Confederate Right, *i.e.*, Grant moving by his own Left. This meant moving through a very difficult country, namely the Wilderness, but there was quite a probability that the army would safely pass through this tract of country before the Confederate General could be in a position to act against it offensively.

There was no difficulty as to supply, and supplies would move on the protected side of the army of the Potomac.

Grant moved accordingly, acting on exterior lines, with the army of the Potomac in the centre, the army of the Shenandoah on the right, and the army of the James on the left. The actual movements are shown in the Essay.

From a strategical point of view apparently very little fault can be found with General Grant, who was undoubtedly a great leader. The passage of the James River in June, 1864, was a great feat, an example for all time.

Notwithstanding, he unquestionably failed in all his objectives in 1864. He neither destroyed the Confederate Field armies, nor did he succeed in

capturing Richmond; nor in destroying the Confederate railways. However, it must be remembered that he was severely hampered by the incompetence of Butler on the James, and Sigel in the Shenandoah. He appears to have fought unnecessary battles, sustaining enormous loss out of proportion to that of his enemy. He himself stated that he wished he had not fought the Battle of Cold Harbour.

From all this we conclude that Grant's strategical plan was carefully, wisely and skilfully thought out; but his tactics appear to have been somewhat faulty.

Discussion of the strategy of the Confederate leader is outside the scope of this Essay, but he appears to have been a more skilful soldier than Grant, and a man of indomitable courage.

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